



ANCESTRAL LANDSCAPES

BURIAL MOUNDS IN THE COPPER AND BRONZE AGES

(Central and Eastern Europe – Balkans – Adriatic – Aegean, 4th-2nd millennium B.C.)

Edited by

Elisabetta BORGNA and Sylvie MÜLLER CELKA



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Proceedings of the International Conference held in Udine, May 15th-18th 2008

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ABBREVIATIONS

Chronology

Br. = Bronze
EBA = Early Bronze Age
EG = Early Geometric
EH = Early Helladic
EIA = Early Iron Age
G = Geometric
LBA = Late Bronze Age
LH = Late Helladic
MBA = Middle Bronze Age
MH = Middle Helladic

English and general abbreviations

A.D. = *Anno Domini*
a.s.l. = above sea level
BAC = Battle Axe Culture
B.C. = before Christ
B.C.E. = before Christian era
B.P. = before present
c. = century
ca. = *circa*
CWC = Corded Ware Culture
e.g. = *exempli gratia*
fasc. = *fascicule*
FBC = Funnel Beaker Culture
GAC = Globular Amphora Culture
i.a. = *inter alia*
ibid. = *ibidem*
i.e. = *id est*
int. = international
n. = note
n.d. = no date
no. = number
nos. = numbers
N.S. = new series
p. = page
PGC = Pit Grave Culture
pl. = plate

SGC = Single Grave Culture

sq. = *sequentes*

sq. m = square meter(s)

s.v. = *sub verbo*

vol. = volume

Italian abbreviations

AA.VV. = autori vari

a.C. = ante Cristo

col. = colonna

c.s. = corso di stampa

d.C. = dopo Cristo

loc. = località

n. = numero

N.S. = nuova seria

tav. = tavola

v. = vedere

German abbreviations

Abb. = Abbildung

Anm. = Anmerkung

Bd. = Band

bes. = besonders

bzw. = beziehungsweise

d.h. = das heisst

ebd. = ebenda

ff. = folgende

Hrsg. = Herausgeber

Jt. = Jahrhundert

Nr. = Nummer

S. = Seite

Taf. = Tafel

u.a. = und anderen

v. Chr. = vor Christus

vgl. = vergleichen

z.B. = zum Beispiel

Periodicals, series and other abbreviations

<i>AD/ΑΔ</i>	<i>Archaiologikon Deltion/Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον</i>
<i>AAA</i>	<i>Archaiologika Analekta Athenon/Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα Αθηνών/Athens Annals of Archaeology</i>
<i>Acta Ath.</i>	<i>Acta Atheniensia</i>
<i>AE</i>	<i>Archaiologike Ephemeris/Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς</i>
<i>AEMTH/AEMΘ</i>	<i>To Archaiologiko Ergo ste Makedonia kai Thrake/Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και τη Θράκη</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AM</i>	<i>Athenische Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts</i>
<i>AMSLAS</i>	<i>Atti e Memorie della Società Istriana di Archeologia e Storia patria</i>
<i>AP</i>	<i>Archeologia Polski</i>
<i>AquilN</i>	<i>Aquileia Nostra</i>
<i>AR</i>	<i>Archaeological Reports of the Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
<i>Arch. Korr.</i>	<i>Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt</i>
<i>Arch. Polona</i>	<i>Archaeologia Polona</i>
<i>Arheol. Vest.</i>	<i>Arheološki Vestnik</i>
<i>ASAtene</i>	<i>Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente</i>
<i>AttiSocPPFVG</i>	<i>Atti della Società per la Preistoria e Protostoria del Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>
<i>BA</i>	<i>Buletin arkeologjik, Tirana</i>
<i>BAM</i>	<i>Beiträge zur ur- und frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie des Mittelmeer-Kulturräume</i>
<i>BAR Int. Ser.</i>	<i>British Archaeological Reports, International Series</i>
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i>
<i>Ber. RGK</i>	<i>Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission</i>
<i>BIA</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, London</i>
<i>BPI</i>	<i>Bullettino di Paletnologia Italiana</i>
<i>BSA</i>	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
<i>BPS</i>	<i>Baltic-Pontic Studies</i>
<i>BSHSH</i>	<i>Buletin për Shkencat Shoqerore, Tiranë</i>
<i>CCDJ</i>	<i>Revista Centrului Cultural Dunărea De Jos</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CMS</i>	<i>Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel</i>
<i>CTHS</i>	<i>Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques</i>
<i>EA</i>	<i>Ephemeris Archaiologiki/Εφημερίς Αρχαιολογική</i>
<i>EAZ</i>	<i>Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>EJA</i>	<i>European Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>HA</i>	<i>Histria Archaeologica</i>
<i>IAI</i>	<i>Izvestiâ na Arheologičeskîa Institut, Sofia</i>

<i>IIPP</i>	<i>Istituto Italiano di Preistoria e Protostoria</i>
<i>IMSZB</i>	<i>Izvestija na Muzeite v Severozapadna B'lgarija</i>
<i>JAK</i>	<i>Jahresberichte aus Augst und Kaiseraugst</i>
<i>JAS</i>	<i>Journal of Archaeological Science</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of European Archaeology</i>
<i>JFA</i>	<i>Journal of Field Archaeology</i>
<i>JIES</i>	<i>Journal of Indo-European Studies</i>
<i>JRGZM</i>	<i>Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz</i>
<i>JZ</i>	<i>Jadranski Zbornik</i>
<i>Materijali SADJ</i>	<i>Materijali Savez arheoloških društava Jugoslavije</i>
<i>Mat. și Cerc. Arh.</i>	<i>Materiale și Cercetari Arheologice</i>
<i>OJA</i>	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>OA</i>	<i>Opuscula Archaeologica</i>
<i>OpAth</i>	<i>Opuscula Atheniensia</i>
<i>ΠΑΕ/ΡΑΕ</i>	<i>Praktika tes en Athenais Archaiologikes Etaireia/Πρακτικά της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας</i>
<i>Pam. arch.</i>	<i>Památky archeologické</i>
<i>PBF</i>	<i>Prähistorische Bronzefunde</i>
<i>PJZ</i>	<i>Praistorija Jugoslavenskih Zemalja</i>
<i>PMMAEŁ</i>	<i>Prace i Materiały Muzeum Archeologicznego i Etnograficznego w Łodzi, Seria Archeologiczna</i>
<i>Por. razisk. neol. eneol. Slov.</i>	<i>Poročilo o Raziskovanju Neolita in Eneolita v Sloveniji, Ljubljana</i>
<i>PPS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society</i>
<i>Przełł. Arch.</i>	<i>Przełłł Archeologiczny</i>
<i>PZ</i>	<i>Prähistorische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>Rev. Arh.</i>	<i>Revista Arheologică (Chișinău)</i>
<i>RGZM</i>	<i>Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz</i>
<i>RP</i>	<i>Razkopki i Proučvanija</i>
<i>RSP</i>	<i>Rivista di Scienze Preistoriche</i>
<i>SA</i>	<i>Sprawozdania Archeologiczne</i>
<i>SCIV</i>	<i>Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche</i>
<i>SIMA</i>	<i>Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology</i>
<i>SkrAth</i>	<i>Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Athen</i>
<i>Studia Arch.</i>	<i>Studia Archeologiczne</i>
<i>U.I.S.P.P.</i>	<i>Union internationale des sciences préhistoriques et protohistoriques</i>
<i>VAHD</i>	<i>Vjesnik za Arheologiju i Historiju Dalmatinsku</i>
<i>VAMZ</i>	<i>Vjesnik Arheološkog Muzeja u Zagrebu</i>
<i>WA</i>	<i>World Archaeology</i>
<i>Zbornik SNM</i>	<i>Zbornik Slovenského národného múzea</i>
<i>ZSAK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte</i>

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Periodicals, series and other abbreviations

<i>AD/ΑΔ</i>	<i>Archaiologikon Deltion/Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον</i>
<i>AAA</i>	<i>Archaiologika Analekta Athenon/Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα Αθηνών/Athens Annals of Archaeology</i>
<i>Acta Ath.</i>	<i>Acta Atheniensia</i>
<i>AE</i>	<i>Archaiologike Ephemeris/Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς</i>
<i>AEMTH/AEMΘ</i>	<i>To Archaiologiko Ergo ste Makedonia kai Thrake/Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και τη Θράκη</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AM</i>	<i>Athenische Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts</i>
<i>AMSLAS</i>	<i>Atti e Memorie della Società Istriana di Archeologia e Storia patria</i>
<i>AP</i>	<i>Archeologia Polski</i>
<i>AquilN</i>	<i>Aquileia Nostra</i>
<i>AR</i>	<i>Archaeological Reports of the Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
<i>Arch. Korr.</i>	<i>Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt</i>
<i>Arch. Polona</i>	<i>Archaeologia Polona</i>
<i>Arheol. Vest.</i>	<i>Arheološki Vestnik</i>
<i>ASAtene</i>	<i>Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente</i>
<i>AttiSocPPFVG</i>	<i>Atti della Società per la Preistoria e Protostoria del Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>
<i>BA</i>	<i>Buletin arkeologjik, Tirana</i>
<i>BAM</i>	<i>Beiträge zur ur- und frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie des Mittelmeer-Kulturraumes</i>
<i>BAR Int. Ser.</i>	<i>British Archaeological Reports, International Series</i>
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i>
<i>Ber. RGK</i>	<i>Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission</i>
<i>BIA</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, London</i>
<i>BPI</i>	<i>Bullettino di Paletnologia Italiana</i>
<i>BSA</i>	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
<i>BPS</i>	<i>Baltic-Pontic Studies</i>
<i>BSHSH</i>	<i>Buletin për Shkencat Shoqerore, Tiranë</i>
<i>CCDJ</i>	<i>Revista Centrului Cultural Dunărea De Jos</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CMS</i>	<i>Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel</i>
<i>CTHS</i>	<i>Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques</i>
<i>EA</i>	<i>Ephemeris Archaiologiki/Εφημερίς Αρχαιολογική</i>
<i>EAZ</i>	<i>Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>EJA</i>	<i>European Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>HA</i>	<i>Histria Archaeologica</i>
<i>IAI</i>	<i>Izvestiâ na Arheologičeskiâ Institut, Sofia</i>

<i>IIPP</i>	<i>Istituto Italiano di Preistoria e Protostoria</i>
<i>IMSZB</i>	<i>Izvestija na Muzeite v Severozapadna B'lgarija</i>
<i>JAK</i>	<i>Jahresberichte aus Augst und Kaiseraugst</i>
<i>JAS</i>	<i>Journal of Archaeological Science</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of European Archaeology</i>
<i>JFA</i>	<i>Journal of Field Archaeology</i>
<i>JIES</i>	<i>Journal of Indo-European Studies</i>
<i>JRGZM</i>	<i>Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz</i>
<i>JZ</i>	<i>Jadranski Zbornik</i>
<i>Materijali SADJ</i>	<i>Materijali Savez arheoloških društava Jugoslavije</i>
<i>Mat. și Cerc. Arh.</i>	<i>Materiale și Cercetari Arheologice</i>
<i>OJA</i>	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>OA</i>	<i>Opuscula Archaeologica</i>
<i>OpAth</i>	<i>Opuscula Atheniensia</i>
<i>ΠΑΕ/ΡΑΕ</i>	<i>Praktika tes en Athenais Archaiologikes Etaireia/Πρακτικά της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας</i>
<i>Pam. arch.</i>	<i>Památky archeologické</i>
<i>PBF</i>	<i>Prähistorische Bronzefunde</i>
<i>PJZ</i>	<i>Praistorija Jugoslavenskih Zemalja</i>
<i>PMMAEŁ</i>	<i>Prace i Materiały Muzeum Archeologicznego i Etnograficznego w Łodzi, Seria Archeologiczna</i>
<i>Por. razisk. neol. eneol. Slov.</i>	<i>Poročilo o Raziskovanju Neolita in Eneolita v Sloveniji, Ljubljana</i>
<i>PPS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society</i>
<i>Przegl. Arch.</i>	<i>Przegląd Archeologiczny</i>
<i>PZ</i>	<i>Prähistorische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>Rev. Arh.</i>	<i>Revista Arheologică (Chișinău)</i>
<i>RGZM</i>	<i>Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz</i>
<i>RP</i>	<i>Razkopki i Proučvanija</i>
<i>RSP</i>	<i>Rivista di Scienze Preistoriche</i>
<i>SA</i>	<i>Sprawozdania Archeologiczne</i>
<i>SCIV</i>	<i>Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche</i>
<i>SIMA</i>	<i>Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology</i>
<i>SkrAth</i>	<i>Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Athen</i>
<i>Studia Arch.</i>	<i>Studia Archeologiczne</i>
<i>U.I.S.P.P.</i>	<i>Union internationale des sciences préhistoriques et protohistoriques</i>
<i>VAHD</i>	<i>Vjesnik za Arheologiju i Historiju Dalmatinsku</i>
<i>VAMZ</i>	<i>Vjesnik Arheološkog Muzeja u Zagrebu</i>
<i>WA</i>	<i>World Archaeology</i>
<i>Zbornik SNM</i>	<i>Zbornik Slovenského národného múzea</i>
<i>ZSAK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte</i>

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Already before the Udine conference, attempts had been made to stimulate cooperation between Bronze Age European and Aegean specialists, including through international meetings.¹ Among these, the Zagreb conference “Between the Aegean and Baltic Seas: Prehistory across Borders”, which took place in 2005,² gave a valuable and most welcome impulse to the sharing of knowledge between scholars of eastern European countries and those of the neighbouring regions. It also made clear how much collaboration was improving both our grasp of topics such as long-distance trade and travel and the study of cultural change. However, the section on burial customs was very small and there was obviously scope for another conference.

The widespread phenomenon of burial mounds, which emerged all over south eastern Europe in the Copper Age (= Chalcolithic or Eneolithic) and the Early Bronze Age, deserved special attention and was the ideal subject to be approached on a broad, international scale. In particular, the scarcity of burial mounds in the Aegean EBA, in contrast with the Balkans and others parts of Europe in the same period, called for their reappraisal in a wider European framework. Yet no comprehensive study of the early development of burial mounds had previously encompassed such a broad geographical scope.³ The Udine conference originated from these considerations. The fact that nearly a hundred participants from nineteen European countries attended the conference and contributed over fifty papers to the present volume amply confirmed their relevance.

Burial mounds (tumuli, barrows, tertres funéraires, Hügelgräber, *tymvoi*, kurgans) constitute a meaningful indication of the growing complexity of societies in the Copper and Bronze Ages, as they are among the earliest examples of monumental architecture involving large-scale organized labour. Although they occur in a wide range of typologically distinct forms, such burials appear to be potentially useful for assessing parallel developments or cultural interconnections in central and south eastern Europe, inasmuch as they are widely distributed, both geographically and chronologically, throughout the area and the period under study.

In the most recent literature on monumental burials, tumuli have become a focal point in the discussion of various current archaeological issues. These concern not only funerary practices and beliefs, but also other major topics such as human occupation and land use; the emergence of fortified settlements and warrior ideology; the making of ritual landscapes; the early exploitation of metal resources and the distribution of prestige metal objects; the organization of long-distance exchange and interaction networks; the development of social inequalities and the appearance of common identities based on shared territories.

Traditionally, burial mounds served as a touchstone in the Indo-European debate, which – as is well known – was based largely upon the supposed diffusion of the Kurgan or Pit-Grave Culture from the steppes north of the Black Sea. This theory has since been considered as an ideological construct,⁴ but tumuli remain one of the key factors which allow the “Aegeo-centric” model of intercultural relations in prehistoric Europe to be challenged.

1. See *e.g.* Bader 1990; Galanaki *et al.* 2007; most recently Whittaker 2008.

2. Galanaki *et al.* 2007.

3. For an earlier synthesis limited to Central and Eastern Europe in the Copper Age, see Srejović, Tasić 1987.

4. Demoule 1998; Demoule 1999; Demoule 2003.

The objectives of the Udine conference were to bring together a large body of evidence in order to define the conditions in which tumulus burial architecture emerged and to highlight recurrent elements or possible determining factors, both in the environmental context and the social organization of the groups that adopted this form of burial.

Most contributions include new evidence from excavations and surface surveys; some provide a welcome re-examination of old data, including skeletal remains. Specific papers deal with the origins and development of tumulus burial architecture, its relation to other contemporary burial forms and settlements, ritual aspects of the use and re-use of burial mounds, their role in land use and occupation patterns and their social and ideological functions and meanings.

Some significant results are worth underlining briefly. In the course of the final discussion, it was stressed, *inter alia*, that mounds were not everybody's form of burial, even when forming extensive cemeteries, but must have been reserved for socially distinct individuals. Pierre Lombard's closing lecture, which fell outside the main scope of the conference and is therefore not included in the proceedings, brought further evidence of this in presenting the Middle Bronze Age cemeteries of Bahrain, where nearly eighty thousand tumuli covering large areas of the island are considered to be elite burials, in spite of their amazing number.⁵

As concerns long-distance relationships, a number of papers provides new evidence of interconnections between the Adriatic and the Aegean on the one side, and the Italian peninsula on the other.⁶ Goods and people were circulating all over south eastern Europe, including by sea, from as early as the Final Neolithic onwards, in spite of the fact that burial mound traditions mostly appear rooted in their local context. Indeed, the fact that the old diffusionist theory of the Kurgan expansion has been largely dismissed is not incompatible with the recognition of interaction on a variety of scales as a mechanism explaining cultural change.

The success of the Udine conference owes a great deal to the participation of scholars working on the archaeological data of eastern European countries, who contributed crucial new evidence to clarify the dynamics of cultural contact and change, especially regarding the Pit-Grave related cultures. Their conclusions point to regional diversity rather than homogeneity, and tend to demonstrate that the appearance of mounds above burials mainly reflected the development of social structures and ideologies. This fits with the results of several papers on the Adriatic coast and the Aegean and can be considered a significant advance in our understanding.

The concept of continuity was also put forward to account for the engendering of ritual value: it was continuous occupation from the Neolithic onwards and the foundation of new monuments in long-settled sites of significance that created ancestral landscapes, where rituals and cult played an important role.

Some contributions on both Aegean and European case-studies concentrated on the long-term evolution of burial mounds, emphasizing their changing forms and functions and developing the notion of palimpsestic landscapes. This aspect has also been explored in the wider field of funerary archaeology in northern Europe,⁷ which could provide the base for future collaboration and further development in research on burial mounds.

In the present volume, the contributions have been arranged according to four large thematic groups within which they follow the same geographical order as that of the conference (Eastern and Central Europe, the Balkans, the Aegean, the Adriatic and the Italian peninsula): 1) symbolism and myth, 2) landscapes, landmarks and cultural identity, 3) burial practices, rituals and people, 4) diffusionism under examination.

The conference would never have taken place without the help and support of many people and institutions. On the French side, where the project originated, we were granted financial support by the Laboratoire Archéorient (UMR 5133 of the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* [CNRS]), the Institute of Human and Social Sciences of the CNRS, the University of Lyon 2, which furthermore provided the posters and printed material of the conference, thanks to the kind collaboration of the personnel from the *Service de la Recherche* and the *Service de la Communication*, and INSTAP (the Institute for Aegean Prehistory), which generously and open-mindedly supported our enterprise. Constant interest and assistance came from the

5. Højlund 2007.

6. Such interconnections have been recently explored through the examination of a varied range of evidence, *e.g.* Forenbaher 2009.

7. Last 2007.

Director of Archéorient, Pierre Lombard, to whom we owe much gratitude. We also thank the Director of the Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée, Rémy Boucharlat, and the Director of the Department of Publications, Jean-Baptiste Yon, who have agreed to include the proceedings of the conference in the series *Travaux de la Maison de l'Orient*, thereby providing the guarantee of a reading committee and offering half of the printing cost. For their valuable help in the editing process, we thank Robert McLean, who revised the English texts, Christine Chataigner, who adapted and translated the bibliographies in Cyrillic characters, and Brigitte Arzens, who prepared the plates. Finally, it is a pleasure to acknowledge the keen collaboration of Annie Thomas who managed the web site of the conference hosted by the Maison de l'Orient.

On the Italian side, we would like to mention the institutions which financially supported the conference, namely the University of Udine and its Dean at that time, Furio Honsell, the *Regione Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, the *Circolo Culturale "Menocchio"* of Montereale Valcellina (Pordenone), and the *Consorzio dei Comuni del Medio Friuli*. For its financial contribution to the publication of the proceedings we are indebted to the *Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica* (PRIN, *Progetti di rilevante interesse nazionale* 2007). For administrative and logistical support we are grateful to the personnel of the *Dipartimento di Storia e Tutela dei Beni Culturali*, the *Centro Convegni* and the *Centro Stampa e Pubbliche Relazioni* of the University, and to those who contributed to the organization of the conference, assuring its serene and pleasant development with their invaluable help, in particular Marika Battistella, Massimo Calosi, Daniele Girelli and also Maria Emanuela Alberti, Viviana Ardesia and Benedetta Prosdocimi. The *Museo Civico del Castello* of Udine and its Director at that time, Maurizio Buora, and the *Centro Regionale di Catalogazione e Restauro* deserve our gratitude for hosting the conference in the magnificent hall of the Castle and the prestigious Renaissance building of Villa Manin at Passariano (Udine). Furthermore, we would like to thank warmly Paola Càssola Guida, who has been professor in Prehistory and Protohistory in Udine for many years and directed projects dealing with tumuli, for her continuous support and for the time she generously spent ensuring the success of our enterprise.

At the end of the conference we enjoyed a very pleasant trip to Istria, thanks to the kindness of our Croatian colleagues, in particular Kristina Mihovilić and Damir Matošević, who generously provided logistical support and guided us, together with Bernard Hänsel and Biba Teržan, around Monkodonja, Mušego and Maklavun, in beautiful and truly ancestral landscapes. We thank them warmly.

Last but not least, we express our gratitude to the members of the advisory board who helped us to get in touch with specialists in the study of burial mounds from all over the area under consideration, and we extend it to all the participants to the conference, especially the contributors to the present volume.

E. B., S. M. C.

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THE TUMULUS IN EUROPEAN PREHISTORY

COVERING THE BODY, HOUSING THE SOUL

Anthony HARDING*

ABSTRACT

Our conference is concerned with tumuli, burial mounds, barrows, kurgans; and in most cases the papers deal with their appearance in specific areas of Europe. But the concept of covering the dead body with a mound of earth or stones is so widespread that larger issues are at stake. The late Marija Gimbutas argued 50 years ago that burial in a kurgan was a characteristic of what became the Indo-European phenomenon, a set of material traits that were unique to a particular group of people whom she called the Kurgan people, who arose during the Late Neolithic or Copper Age on the Russian steppe. On her analysis, the wave of tumulus building that followed in the Early Bronze Age could be seen as deriving from this kurgan ancestry; and so did the Tumulus Culture of the Middle Bronze Age.

This theory has been influential and much discussed, even though there are many problems – geographical, chronological – which beset it. But there is certainly a core of truth in it, in the sense that burying people under a mound of earth is a rather specific behavioural trait. What does this mean, however, in terms of attitudes to the body? On the one hand, the mound of earth served as a means of covering the dead, of disposing of the corpse so that its decaying remains would not be a problem to the senses of the living. On the other, the practice is not the most obvious or labour-saving method of doing this. It is a cultural practice. It serves as a permanent marker of the dead person or people; it has an existence of its own by virtue of its visibility; it can be said to have had its own biography or life, going through various stages of existence. It was more than just a covering for the body; it housed more than just the corporeal remains of a person; it housed that person in the memory of those who lived on, the soul or essence of that person's being; and in doing that, it can be said almost to have become that person.

The paper will look at some of these aspects cross-culturally, and indicate some possible lessons for our understanding of the tumulus in central, southern and south eastern Europe.

The conference, and the volume which emerged from it, was concerned with tumuli, burial mounds, barrows, kurgans; and in most cases the papers dealt with their appearance in specific areas of Europe. But the concept of covering the dead body with a mound of earth or stones is so widespread that larger issues are at stake. Many of the contributors have excavated tumuli, though I am not one of them; several of us are mere archaeological tourists in these matters. No one, however, can afford to ignore the rich body of evidence that is represented by the burial record, and specifically by the tumulus phenomenon.

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*Fig. 1 – Bush Barrow, near Stonehenge, Wiltshire (GB).
Photo: Stuart Needham.*

Let us begin with a well-known tumulus or barrow: Bush Barrow, near Stonehenge in central southern England (*fig. 1*). It has come to occupy a highly important place in discussions of the Bronze Age because it contained a burial with grave-goods typical of the Wessex Culture, and it lies within sight of the great stone monument of Stonehenge. It is in fact one of many barrows that lie in this region; the Stonehenge region, like some others, acted as a magnet for barrow-builders. Bush Barrow may not even have been the richest of the area, but it holds its appeal as typifying the barrow-building culture that went with the construction and early life of Stonehenge, that is to say, in the Beaker period between about 2300 and 1900 cal. B.C.

In what follows, I shall refer to burial mounds as tumuli, barrows or kurgans interchangeably. The Latin word “tumulus” is international, but in English the common word for a burial mound is “barrow” – though there is also an archaic word “tump”, derived from the same root *tum* –, as in Latin *tumeo* (swell), as the word “tumulus”. Our Russian colleagues of course use the word “kurgan”, the derivation of which is Turkic, but which has come to assume a special significance for the period we are talking about here. Other languages have their own words (*table 1*).

Etymology <i>tum</i> -, swell(ing) (Latin <i>tumor</i> , <i>tumeo</i>)	Tumulus/tumulo
English	Tump (archaic), barrow, mound, howe (Scandinavian origin)
French	Tertre
Germanic	Hügel/høj/hög/howe
Russian/Ukrainian	Kurgan/kurhan (Turkic origin)
Slav	Mohyla/mogila/mogilnik
Greek	tymvos (anc. Greek τύμβος)

Table 1. The words for tumulus in various languages.

Naturally there is a large literature on tumuli. Many scholars over the years have been concerned with the study of individual mounds, or groups of mounds, and I make no attempt to list them here. A much smaller number have devoted their professional lives to the study of tumuli *per se*; among them the name of Leslie Grinsell deserves pride of place, since this was his life’s work. His *The Ancient Burial-Mounds of England* remains a classic of such studies,¹ and was followed by numerous individual accounts

1. Grinsell 1936.



Fig. 2 – Silbury Hill, near Marlborough, Wiltshire (GB).
Photo: Elaine A. Wakefield, Copyright © Wessex Archaeology.

county by county,² as well as general studies of areas;³ it was followed by Paul Ashbee's study.⁴ The only comparable catalogue known to me at present is the monumental series *Die Funde der älteren Bronzezeit des nordischen Kreises*,⁵ which, however, proceeds on a quite different basis, since it is concerned to publish all the Early Bronze Age material from Denmark, southern Sweden and northern Germany, whether from mounds or not. There are of course numerous studies of particular areas;⁶ but most of these are either excavation reports or studies of the material from the tumuli of the area in question.

Now barrows come in all different sizes, and several shapes – though we tend to think of them as being round. Some are very small, little more than enough earth to cover a body; some are very large. There are cases where the practice of building a barrow could be carried to extreme lengths. The pyramids of the Old Kingdom of Egypt are essentially barrows, of a special sort; maybe Silbury Hill near Marlborough in southern England was a burial mound, though this has never been proven (*fig. 2*). Barrows also occur in many countries, at many dates, and in many contexts; our concern with later prehistoric Europe is merely one appearance of a widely diffused cultural form.

On excavation, barrows may have a great variety of internal structures: turf stacks; rings of stones or post-holes; fully formed chambers; coffins; stone cists; simple pits; and so on. They may have been used once only; or re-used many times. They may have been erected in one phase of activity; or added to over the years. When they were built, they were presumably not covered with grass or trees, as they are today: depending on the geology and soils, they might have stood out in a remarkable way, especially if they were built on chalk, as is the case in much of southern England.

Some mounds have elaborate structures in their interiors, for instance the great mound of Lusehøj at Voldtofte on Funen, fortunately the subject of excavation in recent times.⁷ I have myself provided a summary of the evidence for internal structures in a number of areas (*e.g.* post rings in the Netherlands, stone settings in various parts of the Balkans).⁸ I have also attempted to chronicle the frequency with

2. List in *e.g.* Ashbee 1960, p. 203.

3. *E.g.* Grinsell 1941.

4. Ashbee 1960.

5. Aner and Kersten 1973-2005.

6. Such as that by J. Briard (1984) for Brittany, P.V. Glob (1970) for Denmark, W. Glasbergen (1954a, 1954b) for the North Brabant area of the Netherlands, C.F.A. Schaeffer (1926) for the Forest of Haguenau, J.L. Píč (1899-1909) for the Plzeň area, V. Budinský-Krička (1967) for eastern Slovakia, and many others.

7. Thrane 1984.

8. Harding 2000, p. 84 *sq.*

which coffins appear in barrows, and made some suggestions about what this may signify. One of the most important aspects of these features is what they tell us about the sequence of construction of the mound, and how the funeral rites may have related to that constructional sequence.

Here we may take some pointers from literary sources. We note that during the funeral of Patroclus, described in *Iliad* Book XXIII, after the funeral pyre had burnt itself out, the bones of the dead hero were picked out and placed in a golden urn. Then a barrow was begun, with the construction of a stone revetting wall and the heaping up of part of a mound within it. This is interesting, as it raises the question of how people got access to the burial area. It is quite clear in many instances that the primary burial, whether placed in a dug pit or laid on the ground surface, can only have occurred before the mound was erected. In many cases this would be true for secondary burials too – unless they were clearly inserted into the mound material. So we see that there were several stages to a barrow burial. First of all, a place had to be selected. It was then marked out with a circular (or other) marker of stones or fence-posts. Presumably at this stage various funeral rites were performed. Only after that was the body interred in the pit that had been dug, or laid on the ground; and only after that was the mound erected. How long did this take? It is hard to know; but it is clear that in most cases this must have been the sequence. It was impossible for a primary grave to be inserted once the mound had been raised.

Barrows of course have often been associated with elements of folklore and mythology.⁹ These include associations with giants, fairies, the devil, mythical or historical personages (in Britain and other parts of northern Europe especially Norse gods), ghosts, and others. Among these is a frequent association with buried treasure, perhaps guarded by a dragon. In this context we may recall the story along these lines in *Beowulf* (the 8th c. Anglo-Saxon poem), the treasure lying in a barrow that contained a secret passage:

“Then Beowulf came as king this broad realm to wield; and he ruled it well fifty winters, a wise old prince, warding his land, until One began in the dark of night, a Dragon, to rage. In the grave on the hill a hoard it guarded, in the stone-barrow steep. A strait path reached it, unknown to mortals [...] The barrow, new-ready, to strand and sea-waves stood anear, hard by the headland, hidden and closed; there laid within it his lordly heirlooms and heaped hoard of heavy gold that warden of rings” (Ch. 31).¹⁰

There are frequent associations with mythical or fantastical creatures, for instance fairies. A nice story concerning Willie Howe in Yorkshire (*fig. 3*) repeated by the barrow specialist Leslie Grinsell goes as follows:¹¹



Fig. 3 – Willie Howe, Yorkshire (GB). Photo: author.

9. Grinsell 1936, p. 40 *sq.*

10. Translation: McMaster University, <http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~beowulf/main.html>, accessed 12 February 2009.

11. Grinsell 1953, p. 76.

“One night a man was riding home from the village of North Burton, when he heard, as he drew near, sounds of merriment issuing from the Howe. He saw a door open in the side of the mound, and riding close to it, he looked in, and beheld a great feast. One of the cupbearers approached and offered him drink. He took the cup, threw out the contents and galloped off. The fairy banqueters gave chase, but he succeeded in distancing them and reaching home with his prize in safety”.¹²

Or this Danish story:

“A peasant was passing by a mound near Slagelse one evening when he saw the whole mound standing on four glowing pillars, and a crowd of little creatures dancing merrily beneath it. One of the trolls came and offered him a large goblet to drink from. The man pretended to drink, but poured the contents over his back and rode off home”.¹³

Do these stories, Grinsell asked, embody a faint memory of the funeral feast that accompanied the deposition of the dead and the erection of the barrow? Or do they merely reflect what country folk are apt to see when returning home after an evening in the pub?

All this is as may be; what it shows us beyond doubt is that the burial mound, or barrow, is a common element in European folklore and literature. Now this is no doubt due on the one hand to the very great frequency with which barrows occur in parts of Europe; but it must also reflect the position which these mounds occupy in the psyche of those who live among them, who see them every day, who reflect on their occupants, and whose forebears they know erected them and who may lie within them.

We should not underestimate the commonness of barrows in some areas. No one, as far as I know, has attempted a count of barrows – even just Bronze Age ones – on a European scale. In northern Europe, two authors or groups of authors have attempted catalogues that one may regard as approaching completeness: Grinsell catalogued all the barrows of the southern counties of England; and Aner and Kersten and their successors have done the same for those parts of Denmark and north Germany that have been covered so far.¹⁴ In theory one could go through these volumes and count up how many tumuli there are in each county studied, but this would be extremely tedious. Glob suggested that there were around 50,000 barrows in Denmark,¹⁵ and there is no reason to see this as an exaggeration: Aner and Kersten indicate that over 43,000 are attested in Denmark (excluding NE Jutland) and Schleswig.

Grinsell listed some 6000 barrows in the counties of Wessex,¹⁶ and this is certainly an underestimate. As long ago as 1936 he estimated the total number in England as between 30,000 and 40,000,¹⁷ though there are problems with what he was prepared to call a barrow since in upland counties there are many small stone cairns which were for stone clearance and not for burial. Glasbergen estimated that between 1500 and 2000 barrows had been extant in the Netherlands at that start of the 20th c.;¹⁸ since then, air photography by Jean Bourgeois and others has greatly increased the numbers in the Low Countries.¹⁹ I am not aware of systematic modern catalogues of tumuli in south Russia and Ukraine, but there are clearly a great many in those areas, to say nothing of the vast steppe lands of central Asia, or Siberia. Gimbutas listed many of the older studies, for instance those of V.A. Gorodtsov in the early decades of the twentieth century.²⁰ Many other examples could be cited. The message is obvious: there are a lot of tumuli in the world.

12. Hartland 1907, p. 78.

13. Grinsell 1953, p. 76.

14. Aner, Kersten 1973-2005.

15. Glob 1970.

16. Grinsell 1941, p. 76.

17. Grinsell 1936, p. 1.

18. Glasbergen 1954b, p. 11.

19. Ampe *et al.* 1996.

20. Gimbutas 1965.

This raises important questions. Why bury under a mound, when there were equally acceptable – and less time-consuming – alternatives? Mound-building is not needed for reasons of pure hygiene, simply to dispose of the body; a hole in the ground does just as well for that; and in terms of labour-saving, simple exposure of the body is best of all. Clearly mound-building is a cultural practice. People who built tumuli wanted to do more than dispose of the body. Certainly they wanted to cover the body, to make it invisible; the process of decay of an unburied body must be most unpleasant to watch. As Claudio says in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*:

“Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice...”²¹

Claudio knows very well what happens to a corpse after death, and he sees an unpleasant future for his spirit as well. The tumulus would provide him with at least the covering for the body that would mean the process of decay would not be visible to all comers. But what about the other things that worry him? Can it prevent his spirit from bathing in fiery floods, or residing in icy regions? Not exactly. It depends on what he thinks his “spirit” consists of. His body he is quite right about; it will rot and become a kneaded clod, a lump of earth. But the things about him that make him Claudio are more than just his body: his “spirit” includes his mind, his thinking processes, his heart, his brain, his soul.

Now you do not need to believe in an afterlife to feel that your spirit, *i.e.* your soul, needs its own resting place after death. Maybe not literally; after all, where does the soul reside? Although Dr Duncan MacDougall of Haverhill, Mass, in 1907 detected measurable declines in weight (21 g or more) at the moment of death in his patients,²² which he attributed to the departure of the soul from the body, few even then would have agreed that the soul had measurable physical essence. We may well believe that our souls, if we have them, go to some other place on death, whether we call it heaven, God's presence, or something else. But for those who are left behind, it is a person's name and reputation that live on. In a preliterate society, where only oral traditions could preserve the memory of the deeds and character of the deceased, the need for an alternative means of hosting the dead person were understandably paramount. There has been much talk in recent years of ancestors; and this is important. The burial mound may not literally house the soul of the deceased, depending on your beliefs; but it certainly does commemorate the person.

How do these ideas fit with our knowledge of the Old World in later prehistory? Bronze Age Europe can be divided into a number of provinces in terms of funerary behaviour: a flat inhumation province, a cremation province, and several barrow-building provinces. In this respect, Alexander Häusler's map of 1977 remains very useful, generalised though it is (*fig. 4*) – and though it does not stretch as far as France and Britain in the west.²³ While one can point to individual areas which such a map does not cover in sufficient detail, in general terms the picture seems to me highly significant. Why the community of cremators in Bronze Age Hungary? Why the practice of differentiating between the sexes in the burial traditions of southern Germany and Austria, or parts of Russia? And why the emphasis on barrow building in south Russia and Ukraine, in Scandinavia, and in Brittany and Britain? And then, in the next period, the Middle Bronze Age, why do so many of the communities of Central Europe abandon the practice of flat inhumation and start building barrows, in what we know as the “Hügelgräberbronzezeit”, or Tumulus Bronze Age?

21. Act III, Scene 1.

22. <http://www.ghostweb.com/soul.html>, accessed 12 February 2009.

23. Häusler 1977.



Fig. 4 – The varying burial traditions of the Early Bronze Age in Central and Eastern Europe (Häusler 1977, fig. 1).
Circles: tumuli with the “mound edge principle”. Semicircles: tumuli. Stippling: cremation; other symbols represent inhumation graves, divided according to orientation and sex.

Now in terms of the history of prehistoric archaeology in the second half of the twentieth century, there is a very specific theory that deals with these matters: the Kurgan theory of the late Marija Gimbutas. She proposed this idea originally in 1956,²⁴ and developed it subsequently in a number of works, the fullest account being in a paper of 1970,²⁵ and further elaborated in a number of other papers – which, it may be noted, became more and more dogmatic in their assertions about the Kurgan Culture. In this paper, she identified the origins and proposed a chronology for the culture: the earliest Kurgan graves coming from the steppe area between the Don and the Urals, north of the Caspian, and most coming from the lower Volga region. Following this, a fourfold development was proposed, Kurgan I being contemporary with Tripolye A and B, and equivalent to Srednij Stog II, Kurgan II parallel with Tripolye Bii (Cucuteni AB), Kurgan III being the climax period and equivalent to Cucuteni B (Tripolye C1). It was in this period that Gimbutas saw “revolutionary changes” in all the countries of central and south eastern Europe, as typified by a whole range of cultures ranging from Vinča to Coţofeni, Baden-Pecel, and others. Finally, in Kurgan IV she saw “continuous waves of expansion or raids [that] touched all of northern Europe, the Aegean area, and the east Mediterranean areas possibly as far south as Egypt”.²⁶ This was the period of the Catacomb Graves, but also the Early Bronze Age rock-cut tombs of the Mediterranean, Vučedol, Bell Beakers in Hungary, the Single Grave culture of the Nordic region. The Kurgan Culture reached Ireland, she remarked in a paper of 1978 “as early as 3500 B.C.” – by which she presumably referred to megalithic mounds covering passage tombs.²⁷

24. Gimbutas 1956.

25. Gimbutas 1970.

26. Gimbutas 1970, p. 181.

27. Gimbutas 1978.

In essence, Gimbutas proposed that Indo-European (I-E) language and culture, which we presume must have diffused across Europe at some point in prehistory (given that most European languages to this day belong to the I-E family, and presuming also that I-E speakers arrived at some point from outside Europe), were to be associated with a specific set of material manifestations, among which was the tumulus. Specifically, Gimbutas pointed to the Copper Age tumuli of the south Russian and Ukrainian steppe, the kurgans of the Pit Grave or Yamnaya kultura, which represent the earliest regular manifestation of the tumulus phenomenon.

According to Gimbutas, the “Kurgan people” are evidenced by single graves in deep shafts, often in wooden chests (coffins) or stone cists marked by low earth or stone barrows; the dead lay on their backs with legs contracted; they were buried with flint points or arrowheads, figurines depicting horses’ heads, boars tusk ornaments and animal tooth pendants. Human sacrifice was allegedly performed during the funeral ceremonies, and sometimes ritual graves of cattle and other animals were added. This is said to contrast with what Gimbutas called the culture of Old Europe (*i.e.* the earlier Neolithic of the Balkans), who “betray a concern for the deification of the dead and the construction of monumental works of architecture visible in mortuary houses, grave markings, tumuli, stone rings or stone stelae, and in the large quantity of weapons found in the graves”.²⁸ She was particularly concerned to stress the association of kurganers with horses, which she thought were being ridden far back in the Neolithic. Naturally she could not know of recent research on the early domestication of horses carried out by Sandra Olsen, David Anthony, Marsha Levine and Alan Outram,²⁹ nor did she have access to recent genetic studies which are transforming our knowledge of the movement of people in prehistory, even if conclusions concerning the spread of the Neolithic are still unclear.

Copper Age tumuli also appear in the Balkans, and with their appearance further west at various parts of the Bronze Age, the theory achieved a wide circulation and many adherents. One example of its uncritical use can be seen in the theory postulated by the late N.G.L. Hammond, that the Shaft Grave circles of Mycenae were originally mounded, and that their ancestry could be seen in the mound erected over the House of Tiles at Lerna, the EBA graves of Levkas, and other instances.³⁰

Interestingly, most critiques of the Kurgan theory have come not from Bronze Age archaeologists but from linguists and those who prefer other “big pictures” to explain how Europe’s prehistoric cultures came into being. There is, notoriously, no agreement among linguists about when and where I-E language originated, and certainly no agreement about which archaeological manifestations it is to be associated with. Gordon Childe favoured the Beaker people as the first I-E people, who he thought were Celts; Colin Renfrew sees the most likely association of language with a spread of peoples as being with the first farmers; Gimbutas would have argued along quite different lines.

Can we really associate the practice of mound-building with a specific people, and assume that the spread of the practice indicates the spread of the people? That is one of the “big questions” of European archaeology, and one which a number of papers in the volume address. My own position is that the practice of tumulus building seems so widespread in time and space that it seems hard to associate it with one particular ethnic group – though I can understand how, in the melting pot that was Early Europe, people could believe this to be the case. There are, however, major arguments against the idea, on archaeological grounds alone – which Häusler’s map indicates very clearly. Burial mode and grave form in Copper and Bronze Age Europe was far too variable for any such simplistic correlation. In any case, what are we to make of the appearance of tumuli in such far-flung places as Japan or North America, where tumuli are very common? It was always unlikely that the megalithic tombs of western Europe were to be associated with movements from the steppe 1000 or 2000 years earlier, and nothing that has happened since Gimbutas was writing has changed that situation.

Tumulus building was a widespread cultural practice in Copper and Bronze Age Europe. Tumuli covered the bodies of many people; their very visibility ensured that they lived on in the minds and lives of those who survived. They were a visible part of the landscape and an ever-present reminder of the ancestral presence

28. Gimbutas 1973, p. 15.

29. *E.g.* Olsen 2003; Anthony 2007; Anthony *et al.* 2006.

30. Hammond 1967.

of those who had come before. In several senses, they were not merely receptacles for the body; they were houses for the still-present spirit, or soul, of the predecessors of the living. They were ever-present to the people who dwelled among them in prehistory; and their presence today gives us a constant reminder of their importance and enduring qualities.

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DIE SAKRALE SYMBOLIK DES KREISES

GEDANKEN ZUM VERBORGENEN SINNBILD DER HÜGELBESTATTUNGEN

THE SACRED SYMBOL OF THE CIRCLE: THE HIDDEN MEANING OF BURIAL MOUNDS

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Entstehung der Hügelbestattungen und die vielfältige Bedeutung des Grabhügels in der Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit, lassen sich weder begreifen noch beurteilen, ohne Verständnis der sakralen Symbolik des Kreises, die die Grundform und Idee eines Hügels definieren. Die eigentlich einfache Form des Kreises präsentiert in der Tat eine vollendete, ideale Gesamtheit, in der sich alle wichtige Elemente der Welt und des Universums, des Gottes, der Sterblichen, des Lebens und des Todes auf eine vollkommene, wenn auch transzendente bzw. metaphysische Weise, verflechten und wiedergeben. Der Kreis trennt und verbindet zugleich, er ist das einfachste und gleichzeitig das fundamentalste Symbol, das die Menschheit je gebildet hat. Deshalb ist es nicht weiter verwunderlich, dass sich im Bewusstsein des Menschen bereits zigtausende von Jahren vor dem Aufkommen der geregelten Grabsitten und vor der Errichtung des ersten Grabhügels die Erkenntnis verankert hat, dass der Kreis und seine Vollkommenheit ein ausgesprochen heiliger Raum sind, der magischen Schutz für die Ewigkeit bietet.

ABSTRACT

The appearance of burial mounds and their significance in the cultural history of humanity cannot be approached or analyzed without an understanding of the sacred symbol of the circle that defines the form and the idea of the mound. The particularly simple form of the circle presents a complete and ideal whole, in which all the important elements of the world and the universe are mixed and manifested in a perfect way – divinity, mortals, life and death, both transcendental and metaphysical. The circle separates as much as it brings together, it is the most simple as well as the most fundamental symbol created by humanity. Thus it is not surprising that thousands of years before the advent of ritualized funerary practices and the building of the first burial mound, the belief became anchored that the circle and its perfection were clearly sacred and offered magical protection.

EINIGE BEMERKUNGEN ZUR GRUNDKONZEPTION UND BEDEUTUNG DES GRABHÜGELS

Ein Grabhügel ist in erster Linie ein Bestattungsplatz und ein auffälliges Grabmal. Für seine Erbauer war er zugleich ein Machtsymbol, eine Verbindung mit den Ahnen und mit dem Boden, ein wichtiger Markierungspunkt und ein Kultplatz für verschiedene Rituale. Das alles sind Eigenschaften eines Grabhügels, die in der Forschung wiederholt zitiert und bestätigt worden sind.¹ Diesen Deutungen soll

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1. Dazu Rader 2003, S. 29 ff.

hier noch eine auf den ersten Blick verborgene und deshalb vernachlässigte, für die Menschheitsgeschichte aber außerordentlich wichtige Funktion dieses Monumentes hinzugefügt werden. Ein Grabhügel war auch das erste monumentale Bauwerk, für das man mit Sicherheit behaupten kann, dass es nicht Gott, sondern dem Menschen gewidmet wurde. Das Auftauchen erster Grabhügel ist demnach ein gewaltiger und mutiger geistiger Schritt gewesen, mit dem sich der Mensch den Göttern zu nähern wagte und seine Ansprüche auf eine höhere Sphäre der himmlischen Ewigkeit offenbarte, die bis dahin nur Gottheiten zugestanden hatte.

Derartige Ansprüche, die als Zeichen eines anwachsenden Selbstbewusstseins des Menschen angesehen werden können, sind bereits in der Grundidee des Grabhügels veranschaulicht. Als Grundidee mögen seine Funktion als Bestattungsplatz und Grabmal einer hochrangigen Persönlichkeit angeführt werden sowie seine Interpretation als Sinnbild des sog. "Weltberges" in dem sich die sterbliche Welt der Erde und das göttliche Himmelreich symbolisch treffen.² Diese Grundfunktion des Grabhügels als eines hoch in Ehre gehaltenen zentralen Ortes, der den Menschen mit seinen heroisierten Ahnen verbindet und das menschliche Dasein mit der ewigen Himmelswelt vereint, bleibt stets ein fundamentales Element eines Grabhügels und zieht sich trotz unterschiedlicher Entwicklungstendenzen, Bebauungen, späteren Nutzungen und Nachbestattungen, wie ein roter Faden durch seine Existenz.³

Die Entstehung eines solchen symbolträchtigen Monuments ist nur in einem höheren Stadium der kulturhistorischen Entwicklung und unter Erfüllung von mehreren ideologischen, ökonomischen und organisatorischen Voraussetzungen möglich gewesen. In der alten Welt treten entsprechende Bedingungen zum ersten Mal während der Frühphase der europäischen Kupferzeit im 5. Jt. v. Chr. auf. Diese kulturhistorische Periode wurde neben einem beachtlichen technologischen und wirtschaftlichen Aufschwung auch durch eine zunehmende Eigenständigkeit der Gesellschaftsgruppen und Personen geprägt. Die ältesten Grabhügel tauchen schon am Anfang dieser Periode eben in Südosteuropa auf. Sie hatten die Form einer relativ kleinen und oft mit einem Steinkranz eingekreisten Erhebung, und beherbergten die Gräber hochrangiger Mitglieder der damaligen Gesellschaft (Casimcea, Suvorovo, Cainari, Tarasova Mogila usw.) (Abb. 1).⁴ Der damals aufkommende Prozess der sozialen Gliederung breitete sich in verschiedenen Teilen Europas rasch aus, so dass bereits im

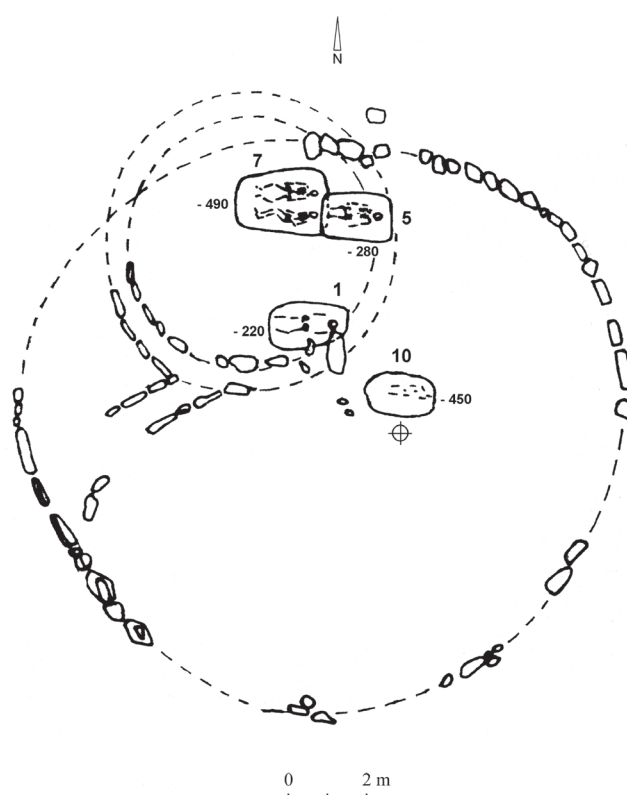


Abb. 1 – Suvorovo, Hügel 1, Odessagebiet, Ukraine: ursprünglicher Kleinhügel mit der Bestattung 7 (Zepterträger) und die erste Nachschüttung aus der späten Kupferzeit mit den Gräber 1, 5 und 10.

2. Über die Interpretation des Grabhügels als Urformel des Weltberges und Vorgänger der sumerischen Zikkurat, indischen Bergtempel und ägyptischen Pyramiden, siehe Rostunov 2007, S. 14.

3. Diese Charakteristika gelten für die kreisförmigen Grabmonumente, die in verschiedenen Räumen und Kulturen auftauchen, und die hier als "Grabhügel" begriffen und behandelt werden. Die länglichen Hügel der Megalithkultur Nord- und Westeuropas (Long Barrows, Passage Graves u.a.), die nach neuen Untersuchungen auch im 5. Jt. v. Chr. entstanden sein könnten, weisen bereits mit ihrer ausgedehnten Form und mehrfachen Bestattungen auf eine andere eher kollektiv gerichtete Symbolik auf und werden in diesem Zusammenhang nicht berücksichtigt. Zu diesen Grabmonumenten: Lynch 1997; Midgley 2005.

4. Govedarica 2004, S. 81, 101-102, 104; Govedarica u.a. 2006, S. 111 ff.



Abb. 2 – Urvan, Kabardinno-Balkarien, Russland: monumentaler Hügel der Majkop-Kultur (Foto S. Reinhold 2007).



Abb. 3 – Kurgan in Marin'skaja, Stavropol'skij Kraj, Russland: Grab 18 mit der rot bemalten Grabkammer eines Fürsten der Majkop-Kultur (nach Kantarovič, Maslov 2008, Abb. 12).

nachfolgenden 4. Jt. monumentale Hügel mit reichen Gräber errichtet wurden, die unter anderem ein klares Anzeichen der Existenz einer Gesellschaftselite gewesen sind (große "königliche" Hügel der Majkop- und Usatovo-Kultur) (Abb. 2).⁵ Die in diesen Hügeln Beigesetzten besaßen offensichtlich so viel Macht und Achtung, dass sie in die Welt der Götter übergehen durften. In den Augen ihrer Gefährten haben sie nach dem Tod anstatt zu sterben, eine Verehrung "erfahren", die etwa mit der Apotheose der römischen Kaiser verglichen werden kann. Eine bessere Perspektive für das Ableben eines Sterblichen ist kaum vorstellbar (Abb. 3).

Die monumentalen Grabmale waren ein sichtbarer Ausdruck der Legitimität dieses göttlichen Anspruches. Für die archäologische Wissenschaft ist das wiederum ein sehr aufschlussreicher Sachverhalt, ein Anzeichen dafür, dass solche hochgradigen Ansprüche bereits in der Reichweite der europäischen Kupferzeitelite gewesen waren. Bemerkenswert ist, dass es sich um die 5. und 4. Jt. v. Chr. handelt, und dass in dieser Zeit erst die Anfangsphase dieser symbolreichen und lang andauernden Bestattungspraxis fällt.

Zu einer besonders starken Ausbreitung der Hügelgräber kam es durch die massive Expansion der Grubengrab-Kultur. Sie fand im letzten Viertel des 4. und in der ersten Hälfte des 3. Jt. v. Chr. statt, in einem breiten Steppengebiet, das sich vom Kaspischen Meer bis nach Pannonien erstreckte.⁶ Im 4. Jt.

5. Majkop: Govedarica 2002, S. 781 ff.; Kantarovič, Maslov 2008, S. 151 ff.; Usatovo: Patokova 1979.

6. Manzura 1993, S. 23 ff.; Rostunov 2007, S. 20.



*Abb. 4 – Jiaohe-Gou
Bei, Xinjiang, China:
Großhügelgrab 16 mit
Begleitgräber und Opfergruben
(nach Werning 2007).*



*Abb. 5 – Kurgan in Cincareni,
Republik Moldau: die
rezente Phase eines alten
Bestattungsortes (Foto B.
Govedarica 1995).*

sind diese Grabmonumente in Mittel- und Westeuropa zu finden (Baalberger Kultur, Megalithkultur)⁷ und ab 3. Jt. erscheinen sie auch im Adriagebiet, in Griechenland und in Nordafrika. Im 2. und 1. Jt. v. Chr. haben sie sich beinahe in die gesamte alte Welt, einschließlich China und Japan, ausgebreitet, so dass die Hügelbestattung in dieser Zeit eine globale Erscheinung geworden ist (Abb. 4).⁸ Während ihrer langen Existenz gewannen die Grabhügel stetig an Bedeutung. Neue Hügel wurden gebaut, in schon bestehende wurden neue Gräber eingebracht und diese mit weiteren Erdschichten überdeckt. Sie wurden zusehends als Bestattungsort einer ganzen Familie oder einer breiteren Gesellschaftsgruppe geehrt. Allerdings blieb der zentrale Teil auch bei diesen familiären Hügeln der ursprünglichen Tradition treu und wurde weiterhin nur als Bestattungsort der Gruppenobersten oder als Bestattungsfeier, dem Ahnenkult gewidmeter Platz, benutzt. Der Nachbau der alten Hügel erfolgte je nach Gebiet in unterschiedlichen Zeitabständen während der ganzen Existenz dieses Grabritus. Die Primärform und die Maße des Grabhügels könnten dadurch stark verändert worden sein, so dass die ursprünglich kleinen Hügel oft täuschenden, monumentalen Dimensionen bekamen (vgl. Abb. 11).

7. Baalberger: Weber 1993, S. 8 ff. Zu Megalithengräbern siehe: von Reden 1989; Baldia 1995.

8. China: Werning 2007a, S. 263; Werning 2007b, S. 288; Japan: Sato, Abe 2008; Ishikawa 2004, S. 231. Es handelt sich um die bronzezeitlichen Hügelgräber, die kürzlich auf der Insel Hokkaido entdeckt worden sind sowie um die königlichen Grabhügel aus der Yayoi-Zeit.

Mit dem Ablauf der Urgeschichtsperiode nahm dieser Bestattungsritus ab. In der antiken Zeit und im Mittelalter tauchen neu gebaute Grabhügel selten auf, während Nachbestattungen in den alten Hügeln auch in historischen Zeiten noch immer oft vorkommen. In den nordpontischen Steppen bleibt der Grabhügel sogar bis in die Neuzeit die gebräuchliche Art des Bestattungsplatzes. Heute gehören Grabhügel zu den zahlreichsten unter allen kulturhistorischen Denkmälern. Diese markanten und stillen Zeugen vergangener Zeiten und Kulturen sind in allen Landschaftsebenen anzutreffen: in der Steppe und am Berggipfel, in der Wüste und auf der Wiese, am Flussufer und an der Meeresküste. Obwohl diese Denkmäler in verschiedenen Kulturgebieten unterschiedlich bezeichnet werden (Hügel, Barrow, Kurgan, Tumulus, Mogila, Gomila) ist ihre besondere sakrale Bedeutung als alte Bestattungsorte und Kultplätze durch die Geschichte hinweg immer wieder erkannt und geehrt worden. In bestimmten Gegenden Südosteuropas werden Nachbestattungen in den uralten Hügeln sogar in der Gegenwart praktiziert (Abb. 5).

GRABHÜGEL UND SAKRALER KREIS ALS FORSCHUNGSPROBLEM

Das Erscheinen der Hügelgräber bereits im 5. Jt. v. Chr., die epochale Bedeutung dieses Faktums, wie auch der innovative Geist des kupferzeitlichen Europa im Allgemeinen, wurden in bisherigen Untersuchungen kaum wahrgenommen.⁹ Das mag teilweise an den bis vor kurzem bestehenden chronologischen Unklarheiten und noch immer existenten Periodisierungsverwirrungen liegen.¹⁰ Doch tatsächlich ist die geringe Beachtung des Aufkommens von Hügelgräbern viel mehr die Folge eines Konzeptions- bzw. Epistemologiemangels, der die Theorie und Praxis der europäischen Archäologie noch immer prägt. Ein Sprichwort sagt: *„Die Weisheit liegt nicht in der präzisen Beschreibung der Dinge sondern in der Beurteilung, warum sie so sind, wie sie sind“*.¹¹ Scheinbar mangelt es in der archäologischen Wissenschaft ausgerechnet an einem solchen Streben nach umfassender und gründlicher Beurteilung eines Forschungsproblems bzw. an den methodischen Ansätzen, mit denen das Informationspotenzial des verfügbaren Materials effizient aktiviert und erschöpfend behandelt werden könnte. Auch eine höhere interdisziplinäre Bereitschaft der Archäologen wäre sicherlich eine wichtige Voraussetzung für eine umfassende Beurteilung dieser beachtenswerten Problematik.

Der Sinn und die Bedeutung eines Grabhügels wie auch andere geistige Eigenschaften der prähistorischen Gesellschaften können meiner Meinung nach nur dann richtig verstanden und beurteilt werden, wenn neben der rational-sachlichen Wahrnehmung, auch die geistigen Elemente, einschließlich der kollektiven Psychologie der betroffenen Gesellschaften, so umfassend wie möglich berücksichtigt werden. Das setzt voraus, dass die Archäologen in einem viel größeren Ausmaß als bisher die Vielfalt der Lebenswahrheit begreifen. Es muss wahrgenommen werden, dass die Rezeption der Realität ein subjektives Erlebnis ist, und dass die Mythen, Legenden, Magien und anderen metaphysischen Kategorien, die in der Forschung mit dem verständlichen wissenschaftlichen und empirischen Abstand als wenig plausible Aberglauben und Jenseitsvorstellungen der prähistorischen Menschen abgetan werden, für diese Menschen schlichtweg Gesellschaftsrealitäten gewesen sind. In der Sozialanthropologie ist eine solche Dichotomie ein anerkannter Sachverhalt und selbst Karl Marx, der Gründer des dialektischen Materialismus, zögerte nicht zu behaupten: *„was ich mir wirklich (realiter) vorstelle, ist eine wirkliche Vorstellung für mich, das wirkt auf mich, und in diesem Sinn haben alle Götter, sowohl die heidnischen als christlichen, eine reale Existenz besessen. Hat nicht der alte Moloch geherrscht? War nicht der delphische Apollo eine wirkliche Macht im Leben der Griechen?“*.¹²

Die Entstehung der Hügelbestattungen und die vielfältige Bedeutung des Grabhügels in der Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit lassen sich weder begreifen noch beurteilen, ohne die Symbolik des Kreises zu verstehen, die in der Grundgestalt eines Hügels tief verborgen ist. Die ausgesprochen einfache Form des Kreises präsentiert in der Tat eine vollendete, ideale Gesamtheit, in der sich alle wichtigen Elemente der Welt

9. Für die Teilaspekte dieses Forschungsproblem, Lichardus 1991.

10. Dazu Lüning 1996, S. 233 ff.; Rassamakin 2004, S. 6 ff.; Govedarica 2004, S. 44 ff.

11. Vučković 2006, S. 98.

12. Marx 1968, S. 370.

und des Universums, des Gottes, der Sterblichen, des Lebens und des Todes auf eine vollkommene, wenn auch transzendente bzw. metaphysische Weise, verflechten und wiedergeben. Der Kreis trennt und verbindet zugleich, er ist das einfachste und gleichzeitig das fundamentalste Symbol, das die Menschheit je gebildet hat. Der Kreis ist die einzige geometrische Form, die in der Natur z. B. als Sonnen- und Mondscheibe, immer wieder sichtbar ist, woraus seine Symbolik als Himmelgeist, Bewegung und ewige Abwechslung des Lebenskreises erfolgt. Die geheimnisvolle Dynamik des Kreises stellt einen Gegensatz zum starren Quadrat dar, das eine statische Formgebung aufweist und die artifizielle Materie sowie die Vergänglichkeit der irdischen Existenz symbolisiert.¹³ In der Magie gilt der Kreis als Symbol des Schutzes gegen böse Geister und Dämonen, deshalb ist es nicht weiter verwunderlich, dass sich im Bewusstsein des Menschen bereits zigtausende von Jahren vor dem Aufkommen der geregelten Grabsitten und vor der Errichtung des ersten Grabhügels die Erkenntnis verankert hat, dass der Kreis und seine einfache Vollkommenheit ein ausgesprochen heiliger Raum sind – ein mächtiger *circulus sacer* – der magischen Schutz für das Dasein und für die Ewigkeit bietet.

DER KREIS – DIE ÄLTESTE GRUNDFORM DES DEFINIERTEN RAUMES

Sucht man nach den ältesten, vom Menschen geschaffenen Räumlichkeiten, so trifft man schnell auf die bescheidenen Hütten und Zelte aus der paläolithischen Periode. Wie die Grundrisse aus dem Lagerplatz des *Homo erectus* Bilzingsleben in Thüringen zeigen, bauten schon die frühen Menschen Freilandunterkünfte in Form einfacher runder oder ovaler Hütten.¹⁴ Die jungpaläolithischen Mammutjäger aus der Mittel- und Osteuropa hatten in ihren Freilandstationen Zeltbauten, die ebenso halbsphärischer Form aufweisen (*Dolní Věstonice*, Kostenki, Mezin, Gönnersdorf u.a.) (*Abb. 6*).¹⁵ Bisherigem Forschungsstand zufolge sind solche runde oder ovale Formen die bevorzugten Raumentwürfe in der frühen Baukunst gewesen. Der paläolithische Sammler und Wanderjäger brauchte die tragbaren und leicht wieder einsetzbaren Behausungen, wofür diese einfachen Baukonstruktionen sicherlich gut geeignet waren. Man fragt sich jedoch, ob es Absicht oder Zufall war, dass die ersten Erbauer in der Menschengeschichte zigtausende von Jahren zumeist runde Bauten errichtet haben?

Der paläolithische Nomade musste seine ersten künstlichen Unterkünfte ohne geeigneten Vorbilder und Erfahrungen erschaffen, was sicherlich kein leichtes Unterfangen war. Deshalb können wir davon ausgehen, dass die frühesten kreisförmigen Behausungen nicht auf einem durchdachten, empirischen Prinzip beruhten, sondern es sich bei ihnen um eine spontane, wenn auch zufriedenstellende und nachhaltige Erfindung gehandelt hat. Doch bei der Suche nach den Beweggründen für diese spontane und dennoch zweckvolle Baukonzeption sollten das ursprünglich akkumulierte Intuitionsvermögen und die Perzeptionsfähigkeiten des frühen Menschen nicht unterschätzt werden. Die Form des Kreises war dem paläolithischen Jäger und Sammler vom Himmel, der ihn ständig umgab, allemal bekannt, und wir können davon ausgehen, dass die ständige Bewegung der Gestirne mit seiner nomadischen Weltanschauung gut harmonisierte. Mit seinen halbsphärischen Zeltbauten könnte er die umgebende Natur intuitiv als Muster genommen und möglicherweise sogar das ihm sichtbare Himmelgewölbe in Miniatur nachgeahmt haben. Vielleicht spürte er auch, dass die kreisförmigen Bauten mit der Natur harmonierten, so dass sie bei ihm ein besonderes Schutzgefühl und Geborgenheit hervorriefen.

Folglich kann man davon ausgehen, dass artifizielle Formen wie das Quadrat, der Rechteck und Würfel, die symbolischen Antipoden des Kreises, dem Menschen des Paläolithikums noch unbekannt waren. Die statische Gestalt und die davon abgeleiteten substanziellen und symbolischen Eigenschaften des Quadrats treten erst bei sesshaften Kulturen auf, sind dementsprechend wohl auch erst in dieser Zeit verstanden und wahrgenommen worden. So wurden stabile, viereckige Gebäude erst im 9. Jt. v. Chr. in Nevalı Çori und in Çayönü bzw. in den ältesten bodenständigen Siedlungen gebaut.¹⁶ Es scheint fast so, als wäre das symbolische Potenzial des Quadrats

13. Lawlor 1989.

14. Mania 1990; Kuckenburger 1993, S. 20 ff.

15. Klima 1963; Efimenko 1958, S. 58 ff.; Soffer 1985, S. 80 ff.; Bosinski 1969, S. 16.

16. Hauptmann, Özdoğan 2007, S. 26 ff.

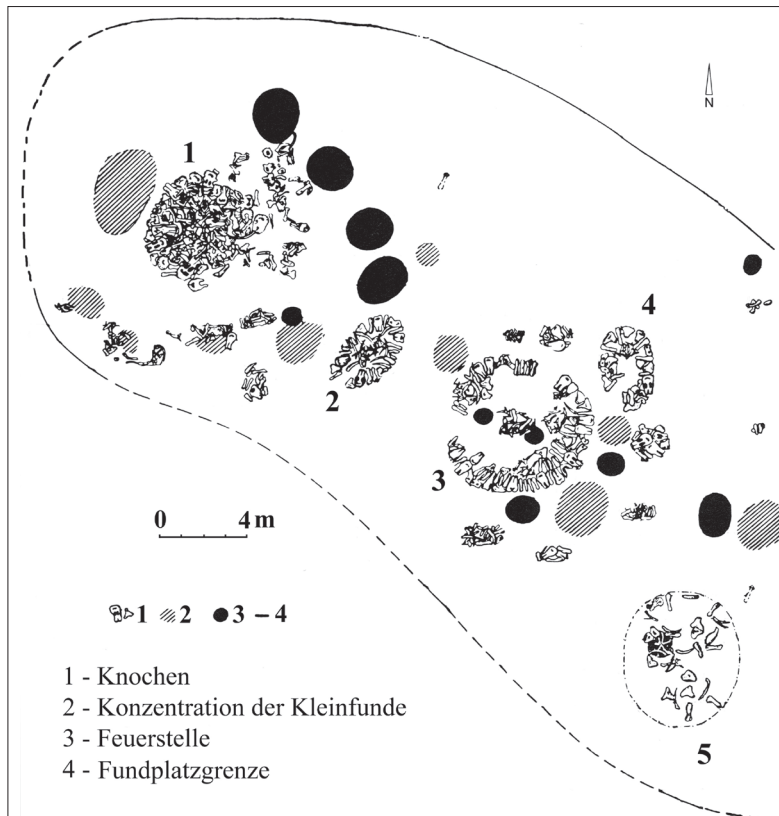


Abb. 6 – Mezin, Geb, Černigovsk, Ukraine. Lagerplatz der Mammutjäger mit Grundrissen von fünf runden und ovalen Zelten (nach Soffer 1985).



Abb. 7 – Mongolische Jurte (Rekonstruktion im DAI – Berlin, Foto P. Grunwald 2006).

vielen nomadisch lebenden Menschen weiterhin fremd geblieben. Selbst in Zeiten, als Wanderhirten parallel neben den sesshaften Ackerbaugemeinschaften lebten, blieb ihnen der Kreis als eine ideale und symbolreiche Form in vollem Maße vertraut. Anschaulich wird dies beim Betrachten althergebrachter Bautraditionen, wie sie bei der rundförmigen asiatischen Jurte oder dem Tipi der nordamerikanischen Indianer noch erhalten sind (Abb. 7). Keinesfalls sollen hier die Vorteile der leichten Konstruktionsweise, die den schnellen Bau und Wiederaufbau von Jurte und Tipi ermöglichten, klein geredet oder negiert werden. Doch soll auch die Kontinuität ihrer Grundform betont werden, die, unter anderem, als Ausdruck einer lang anhaltenden, substanziell und sinnbildlich wirkenden Schutzfunktion des Kreises, verstanden werden kann.

DER KREIS ALS DEFINITION DES ÄLTESTEN SAKRALEN RAUMES

Ausgehend von der augenscheinlichen Kompatibilität der Symbolik des Kreises und zyklischen Lebensart der Nomaden lässt sich vermuten, dass schon manche paläolithische Rundbauten eine sakrale Funktion gehabt haben könnten. Das wurde jedoch bislang nicht nachgewiesen. Die ersten sicheren Hinweise in Richtung einer räumlichen Verkörperung des *circulus sacer* lieferten die kürzlich freigelegten epipaläolithischen Steinbauten aus Hallan Çemi, Çayönü, Göbekli Tepe, Tell Abr und Jerf el Ahmar, die im Berggebiet Nordmesopotamiens bereits ab 10.000 Jahren v. Chr. gebaut wurden und sich demnach als die älteste monumentale Architektur der Menschheit erwiesen haben.¹⁷ Diese spektakulären Entdeckungen bedeuteten eine Sensation in der Welt der Archäologie, da sie, unter anderem, die drei folgenden, meines Erachtens bahnbrechenden Schlussfolgerungen mit sich brachten: 1. in der Menschengeschichte gab es Zivilisationen, die lange Zeit vor der sog. „Urbanen Revolution“ beachtliche und komplizierte architektonische Werke gebraucht und geschaffen haben; 2. die älteste bodenständige und monumentale Architektur hatte sakralen Charakter; 3. die ersten Tempel waren kreisförmig.

Obwohl die nähere Funktion dieser ältesten Kultstätten noch nicht ausreichend geklärt worden ist, steht ihre sakrale Bestimmung außerhalb jedes Zweifels. Die großen Rundbauten aus Hallan Çemi, Çayönü, Tell Abr und Jerf el Ahmar sind als Gemeinschaftsgebäude für öffentliche Begegnungen und Rituale interpretiert worden.¹⁸ Am Boden eines solchen rundförmigen Gebäudes aus Jerf el Ahmar (Gebäude EA30) wurde ein menschliches Skelett mit abgetrenntem Schädel freigelegt, was offensichtlich auf eine rituelle Opferhandlung hindeutet. Das ganze Gebäude wurde danach verbrannt.¹⁹

Im Göbekli Tepe befand sich ein einzigartiges „Bergheiligtum“ mit mindestens 20 monumentalen runden Anlagen von denen bisher vier freigelegt wurden (Abb. 8).²⁰ Innerhalb ihrer kreisförmigen Steinmauern sind mehrere große „T“-förmige mit Tierrelief verzierte Steinstatuen inkorporiert worden. In der Mitte jeder der Anlagen standen jeweils zwei noch größere solche Pfeiler (Abb. 9). Diese Rundbauten mit ihren monumentalen Steinskulpturen, die die Götter oder andere Fabelwesen versinnbildlichten, wurden nach bestimmter Zeit



Abb. 8 – Göbekli Tepe, Şanlıurfa, Türkei: das Grabungsareal mit den Anlagen C und D (nach Hauptmann, Özdoğan 2007).

17. Hallan Çemi: Rosenberg 2007, S. 54-55; Çayönü: Özdoğan 2007, S. 58 ff.; Göbekli Tepe: Schmidt 2007, S. 74 ff.; Tell Abr: Yartah 2005, S. 3 ff.; Jerf el Ahmar: Stordeur 2000, S. 33 ff.

18. Rosenberg 2007, S. 54.

19. Stordeur 2000, S. 33 ff.; Die Vermutung von Aurenche, dass die runden Gebäude aus Jerf el Ahmar, die Befestigungstürme gewesen sein konnten ist wenig plausibel. Vgl. Aurenche 2007, S. 56.

20. Hauptmann, Schmidt, 2007, S. 67 ff.; Schmidt 2007, S. 74-75.



Abb. 9 – Göbekli Tepe Şanlıurfa, Türkei: Anlage D während der Grabung (nach Schmidt 2007).

regelmäßig mit einem Erdhügel zugedeckt.²¹ Daraus lässt sich auf eine symbolische Bestattung dieser Fabelwesen schließen. Dementsprechend wird sogar das gesamte Heiligtum aus Göbekli Tepe mit dem Toten- und Ahnenkult in Verbindung gebracht.²²

Die sakrale Bedeutung des Kreises und der Rundbauten zieht sich mehr oder weniger durch die gesamte weitere Urgeschichtsentwicklung (Mandala in Sanskrit, Stonehenge usw.). Dadurch lässt sich die Beständigkeit dieser uralten Symbolik des Kreises, als eines sinnbildlichen, heiligen Raumes, in unterschiedlichen kulturhistorischen Bereichen weiter verfolgen. Als Beispiel seien an dieser Stelle die in der letzten Zeit oft untersuchten Kreisgraben- und Palisadenanlagen aus dem mitteleuropäischen Neolithikum erwähnt (Osterhofen-Schmiederoth, Bučany, Svodín, Goseck u.a.).²³ Solche Anlagen bestanden aus einem, zwei oder drei konzentrischen Gräben oder Palisaden mit einem Durchmesser von 40 bis 300 m. Sie wurden zumeist in der Peripherie einer Siedlung nicht als Wohngebiet, sondern als ein Sonderplatz für gesellschaftliche, religiöse und politische Zusammenkünfte gebaut (Abb. 10). Ihre Form, definiert durch konzentrisch geordnete Gräben und Palisaden, weist eindeutig auf die sakrale Kraft des Kreises hin, der diesem Raum eine besondere Bedeutung gab und einen immerwährenden Schutz leistete.

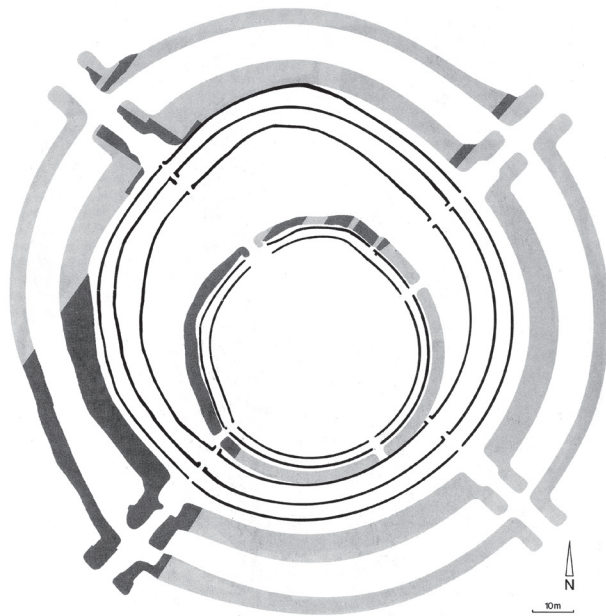


Abb. 10 – Svodín, Nove Zámky, Slowakei: Kreisgrabenanlage 1 und 2 der Lengyel-Kultur (nach Petrasch 1990).

21. Schmidt 2007, S. 75.

22. Ebd.

23. Petrasch 1990, S. 407 ff.; Bartels u.a. 2003, S. 97 ff.

KREIS, HÜGEL, TUMULUS – VERSUCH EINES FAZITS

Die ideale Form des Kreises, in der sich zwei extreme Gegensätze, die Bescheidenheit und die Vollkommenheit vereinen, macht ihn zu einem exzellenten und unerschöpflichen Sinnbild, das in allen geistigen Sphären einsetzbar ist. Die symbolische Kraft des Kreises kommt jedoch nirgendwo so stark zum Vorschein wie im Kult des Todes und insbesondere im Bestattungsritual, in dem das schicksalhafte Zusammentreffen des Lebens und des Todes versinnbildlicht und geregelt wird. Die Idee der Unendlichkeit des Lebenskreises, die in dieser Form auf so einfache und zugleich äußerst effektive Weise veranschaulicht ist, kommt hier als eine bitter benötigte geistige Hilfe vor, um die ewige Hoffnung des Menschen, dass es doch kein endgültiges Ende gibt, zu unterstützen, und den Schrecken des Sterbens zu lindern. Diese und weitere sinnbildliche Wirkung des Kreises zeichnet sich innerhalb der Hügelbestattungen besonders gut ab.

Betrachtet man einen Grabhügel als eine vollkommene Einheit, dann müssen neben dem Grab auch der Kreis und die Hügelkuppel als zwei weitere physische und spirituelle Eigenschaften wahrgenommen werden. Ohne die eigentliche Funktion eines solchen Monuments als Bestattungsplatz zu verniedlichen, soll betont werden, dass nicht das Grab sondern der Kreis und Kuppel diejenigen Determinationsfaktoren sind, die einem Tumulus seine charakteristische Form geben und ihn als eine Sonderstatur in seiner Umgebung hervorheben. Bereits in diesen äußerlichen Kennzeichen liegt eine symbolische Kraft, die nicht unterschätzt werden darf. Es ist auffällig, dass der ursprüngliche Raum eines Hügels in der Regel weit über die Bedürfnissen des dort untergebrachten Grabes reicht. In diesem Raum wurden oft Rituale verübt, die nicht nur mit dem vorhandenen Bestattungsritual verbunden waren. Das alles weist darauf hin, dass die Hügelkuppel nicht nur als physischer Schutz des Grabes und als Grabmal gedacht und errichtet wurde. Damit wurde ein weiterer, ebenso wichtiger sakraler Raum umfasst und die Monumentalität des Ortes erschaffen. Der Kreis und die Kuppel hatten dabei unterschiedliche Schutzfunktionen, die innerhalb zweier getrennter Ebenen substantiell und symbolisch wirkten.

Der Geltungsbereich des Kreises liegt vor allem im spirituellen Rahmen, in dem symbolischer Schutz des sakralen Raumes eines Grabhügels geleistet wird. Um diese Symbolik zu unterstreichen, wurden oft am Rand des Hügels kreisförmige Einrichtungen, wie Stein- und Holzkranz oder Graben angelegt (*Abb. 11*). Innerhalb dieser Konstruktionen waren manchmal Durchgänge eingelassen, die den Zugang zum geschützten Raum während des Bestattungsrituals ermöglichten. Besonders aufschlussreich sind die kreisförmigen Gräben in Form einer Schlange, die sich in den Schwanz beißt (*Abb. 12*). Die Schlange bildet ein Symbol des Werdens und Vergehens der Natur. Im Grabhügel wird dadurch das Prinzip des Lebenskreises und der permanenten Wiederkehr veranschaulicht.²⁴

Diese Konstruktionen sind während der Einweihung des Platzes und vor der Aufschüttung des Hügels eingerichtet worden. Neben der Markierung und dem Schutz der umfassenden Fläche zeigen sie auch, dass sich die spirituelle Wirkung des Kreises grundsätzlich auf die horizontale Ebene bezieht. Es ist zu vermuten, dass manche Stein- oder Holzkränze auch als eine zusätzliche Befestigung der Hügelkuppel gedient haben könnten. Das wäre allerdings die einzige substantielle Funktion des Kreises, die in diesem Zusammenhang nur eine sekundäre Bedeutung haben könnte. Eine Sonderfunktion hatten konzentrische Steinmauern, die in einigen Fällen um einen Grabhügel herum gebaut worden waren. Wie das Beispiel aus Rogem Hiri (Rujm al-Hiri) auf den Golanhöhen zeigt, konnte damit eine große Fläche als ein zusätzlicher sakraler Raum umfasst werden, der als ein größerer Kultplatz gedient hatte.²⁵

Im Unterschied zum verborgenen und zumeist metaphysisch wirkenden Kreis verkörpert die Kuppel die physische und sichtbare Ebene eines Hügels und spielt somit eine eher konkrete, substantielle Rolle. Die Kuppel leistet dem Grab und umfassenderen Hügelraum wahrhaftigen Schutz. Durch ihre Masse wurde auch die soziale Funktion des Hügels als Symbol der Macht und des Besitzes des Territoriums sowie als

24. Rostunov 2007, S. 329.

25. Aveny, Mizrachi 1998, S. 475 ff.

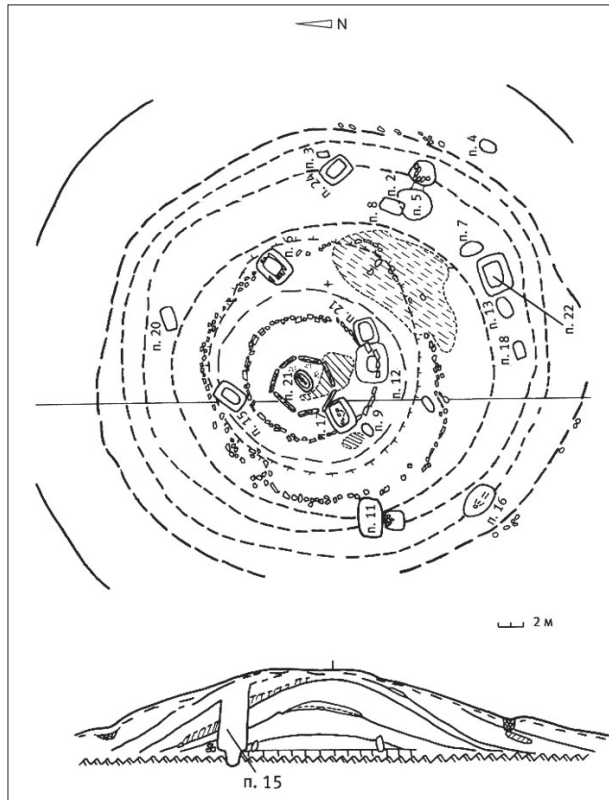


Abb. 11 – Hügel 1 in Kamenskoe, Geb. Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine: ursprünglich kupferzeitlicher Grabhügel mit mehreren bronzezeitlichen Nachschüttungen und Steinkränzen (Abbildung nach Rassamakin 2004).

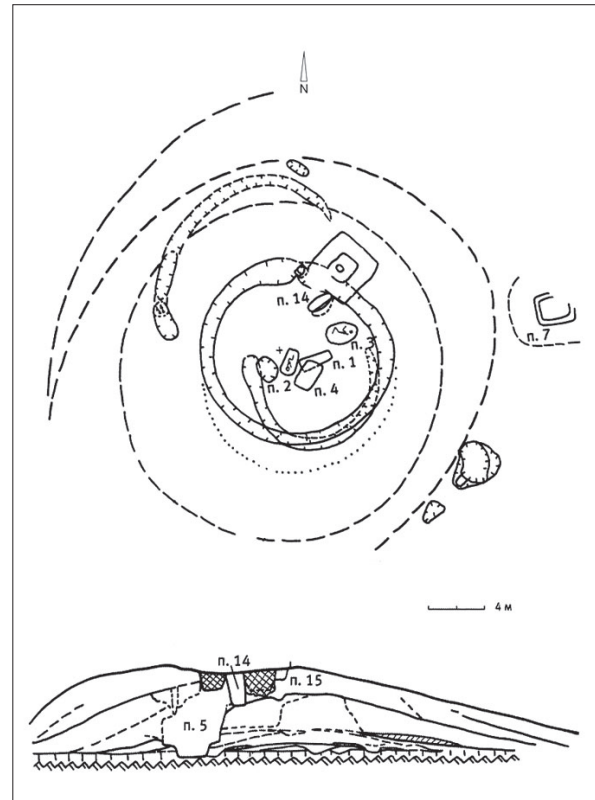


Abb. 12 – Pidlužne, Geb. Poltavsk, Ukraine: mehrfache Schlangengräben im Hügel 1 (Abbildung nach Rassamakin 2004).

Markierungspunkt hervorgehoben. In ihrer Monumentalität liegt ebenso die symbolische Funktion der Kuppel, in der sie die vertikale spirituelle Ebene verkörpert und als “Weltberg” eine Verbindung der Erde mit dem Himmelreich versinnbildlicht.

So wurde ein Grabhügel zum Bestattungsort und darüber hinaus zu einem wichtigen geistigen Bezugspunkt, der Tod und Leben verbindet.²⁶ Das Urprinzip eines solchen Zentralortes ist in den bereits erwähnten Kreisanlagen aus Göbekli Tepe, Hallan Çemi, Jerf el Ahmar u.a., die epipaläolithischen Jägern und Sammlern als Heiligtümer auch im Rahmen des Todeskultes gedient haben, zu erkennen. Das menschliche Skelett aus dem rundförmigen Gebäude in Jerf el Ahmar könnte ein von Anzeichen dafür sein, jedoch dürfte es sich hier eher um einen Ausnahmefall, d.h. um eine Sonderbestattung in einem Heiligtum, als um eine einfache Beerdigung handeln.²⁷ Dahingegen lässt sich in Göbekli Tepe eine wahrhaft richtungweisende Entwicklungslinie festmachen. Die dortigen Rundbauten mit ihren monumentalen Steinstatuen wurden regelmäßig mit einem Erdhügel zugedeckt, d.h. symbolisch bestattet.²⁸ Dadurch ist hier, wenn auch nur in einem bildlichen, symbolischen Sinn, die Konzeption eines Bestattungshügels zu erkennen. Diese ca. 12.000 Jahre alten Befunde können demnach als eine uralte Vorstufe der Hügelbestattungen wahrgenommen werden. Leider fand diese beachtenswerte und viel versprechende Tradition keine Fortsetzung in der weiteren Kulturentwicklung Vorderasiens. Die runden Heiligtümer verschwanden bereits im Laufe des präkeramischen Neolithikums. Die Hügelgräber als eine geregelte Bestattungspraxis entstanden mehrere tausend Jahre später in weit entfernten Gebieten Europas.

26. Dazu Rader 2003, S. 29 ff.

27. Aurenche 2007, S. 56.

28. Schmidt 2007, S. 75.

Von der Stärke dieser chronologischen und geokulturellen Diskrepanz ausgehend, lässt sich schließen, dass zwischen den runden Heiligtümern und symbolischen Grabhügeln aus Göbekli Tepe und dem Auftauchen der europäischen Hügelbestattungen keine unmittelbare Entwicklungslinie abgeleitet werden kann. Doch es gibt auch in diesem diachronen Kontext Verbindungselemente, die vor allem geistig-ideologischer Natur sind und deren Kausalität nicht unbedingt eine kontinuierliche Entwicklung und materielle Übereinstimmungen voraus setzen. Die Ideologie als ein leitender Teil der Sozialkultur weist eigene Entwicklungsmechanismen und Gesetzmäßigkeiten auf, die im engen Zusammenhang mit der grundsätzlichen Lebensart und Weltanschauung der betroffenen Gesellschaft stehen. Unter bestimmten Umständen kann diese, die Lebenseinstellung bestimmende Kategorie, auch bei den unterschiedlichen Gesellschaftsgruppen und unabhängig von der Zeitperiode gleichartig sein. Bei den symbolischen Grabhügeln aus Göbekli Tepe und viel späteren Hügelbestattungen haben wir mit der Wiederholung des gleichen Ideenmusters in völlig divergenten Zeit- und Kulturkontexten zu tun, was offenbart, dass diese unterschiedlichen Gruppen unabhängig voneinander identische Gedankenmodelle entwickelt haben. Ein umgekehrtes Beispiel stellen die Ackerbauern und die Nomaden dar, die, trotz einem tausendjährigen Nebeneinanderleben und abgesehen von ihren Entwicklungsstadium, immer wieder ein unterschiedliches ideologisches Musterbild aufweisen.

In den hier genannten Beispielen, von paläolithischen Zelten über anatolische Bergheiligtümer bis zu den europäischen Hügelgräbern, lässt sich eine ideologische Konstante festmachen, die in verschiedenen Zeitperioden und in unterschiedlichen Kulturkontexten immer wieder auftaucht und ein gleiches Sinnbildmuster wiedergibt. Es handelt sich um die Ideologie des Nomadentums und um den Kreis, der sie versinnbildlicht. In dieser langfristigen Wiederholung gleicher Muster spiegeln sich Beständigkeit und Unbeugsamkeit, die das Nomadentum prägen. In der Tat präsentieren Nomaden, die von ihren Herden abhängen und alten Sitten treue bleiben, genauso wie ihr Sinnbild der Kreis, der eigentlich nur ungebeugt bestehen kann, eine zähe und von Natur aus veränderungswidrige kulturhistorische Kategorie. Dahingegen fand der Kreis bei den sesshaften neolithischen Kulturen viel weniger Akzeptanz und Bedeutung. Eine Ausnahme bilden die mitteleuropäischen Kreisanlagen, die, wie bereits erwähnt, eine konkrete gesellschaftliche Funktion innehatten.

Wie der Kreis, so ist auch der Grabhügel eine Eigenschaft des Nomadentums. Deswegen ist es nicht weiter verwunderlich, dass die ersten Tumuli nicht im südosteuropäischen Ackerbaug Gebiet, in dem die führenden kupferzeitlichen Kulturen Gumelnița, Varna u.a. ansässig waren, sondern im nächst benachbarten steppenartigen Gebiet um das Donaudelta entstanden sind (Suvorovo, Casimcea, Cainari). Von dort aus breitete sich dieses Monument rasch innerhalb der Steppen zwischen Donau und Dnestr aus (Tarasova Mogila u.a.), d.h. in einem klassischen Nomadengebiet an der östlichen Peripherie dieses Gebietes mit Kupfervorkommen. Die Grabhügel sind zwar auch in anderen Teilen der alten Welt massiv präsent, allerdings nirgendwo so häufig und konsequent wie in den nordpontischen Steppen. Die globale Expansion der Grabhügel verfolgend, lässt sich im Allgemeinen erschließen, dass dieser Grabbau vor allem bei Nomaden bzw. bei Wanderhirten und transhumanten Viehzüchtern, und viel weniger bei sesshaften Bauern beliebt und bevorzugt war. Demzufolge sollen die vereinzelt Grabhügel aus Westeuropa, die nach einigen neuen Untersuchungen bereits im 5. Jt. v. Chr. auftauchen (Boutte de César u.a.)²⁹, ebenso ein Ausdruck der Nomadenideologie gewesen sein. In diesem Fall sollte es sich um die Tradition der mesolithischen Jäger und Sammler gehandelt haben.³⁰ Allerdings präsentieren nicht solche kreisförmige Hügel sondern die längliche Gestaltung eines LBK-Hauses nachahmenden "Long barrows" die führende Form des Grabmonumentes im Neolithikum Westeuropas.³¹ Ihre gestreckte Gestaltung nähert sich einem Parallelogramm, d.h. einem symbolischen Widersacher des Kreises, was meiner Meinung nach, ebenso ein Zeichen der sesshaften neolithischen Kulturen ist. Die kreisförmigen Grabhügel mit zentraler Bestattung werden erst in der Bronze- und Eisenzeit eine globale Bedeutung bekommen, was möglicherweise als ein sinnbildlicher Ausdruck einer geänderten Lebenseinstellung verstanden werden kann.

Es gibt viele Gründe, warum die Grabhügel in den Grasssteppen und in steppenartigen Gebieten am häufigsten und am konsequentesten erbaut wurden. Zuerst machten solche Monumente in der Steppe viel mehr Eindruck, als in hügeligen und bewaldeten Gebirgszonen. Darüber hinaus konnte der Steppennomade mit diesen

29. Boujot, Cassen 1993, S. 477 ff. Dazu noch Sherratt 1990.

30. Boujot, Cassen 1993, S. 477 ff. Dazu noch Sherratt 1990, S. 146 ff.

31. Midgley 2005 und dort zitierte weiterführende Literatur.

Monumenten einen festen Anhaltspunkt bilden, den er als geistiges Gleichgewicht und Gegengewicht zu seinen ständigen Wanderschaften in dieser weiten Ebene brauchte. Das ist ein wahres Steppensyndrom, ein Wunschtraum nach einer geistigen Zuflucht, den die provisorischen Zelte und Jurten nicht befriedigen konnten. Letztendlich ist der Grabhügel dieser beruhigende Anhaltspunkt, das Haus der Toten und ein mächtiges Domizil für die Ewigkeit, den unsere antiken Vorfahren für ihre Ahnen und für die eigene Seele erbaut haben. Das Errichten eines solchen Monuments war sicherlich ein aufwendiges, aber angesichts der Vielfalt seiner sozialen und geistigen Funktion, durchaus sinnreiches Vorhaben.

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THE ARSLANTEPE ROYAL TOMB AND THE “MANIPULATION” OF THE KURGAN IDEOLOGY IN EASTERN ANATOLIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

Giulio PALUMBI*

ABSTRACT

The first appearance of the Kurgan funerary tradition in the Northern Caucasus (Majkop-Novosvobodnaya) dates to the second half of the fourth millennium and records an impressive display and accumulation of wealth in the grave goods (mainly metal objects) which stress the emergence of radical social transformations in the communities of the region. But kurgans also signal a new approach to territory and a different conception of the landscape. The Arslantepe Royal Tomb (in the Upper Euphrates Valley, eastern Anatolia), which is dated to 3100-2900 B.C., shows that far-reaching influences from the Northern Caucasus were already crossing the Greater Caucasus range and that they were being assimilated by the Anatolian power groups. The set of traits that the Arslantepe Royal Tomb shares with the funerary representations of the northern Caucasian Kurgans (ritual, grave goods and eventually the location chosen for the burial) was the result of a symbolic and ideological selection performed by a local community. It aimed at legitimising and justifying the current historical and political contingencies and the emergence of new images and power rules. What can be grasped of the general sense and cultural values of the phenomenon of the northern Caucasian Kurgans by means of an interpretation performed by an external (and distant) community?

THE KURGAN TRADITION IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS

Kurgans (a Turkish word which stands for tumulus, mound and lastly tomb) in the Northern Caucasus became a largely diffused funerary tradition beginning from at least the second half of the fourth millennium.¹

Majkop earlier and Novosvobodnaya later (*fig. 1*) are the two main cultural traditions linked to some of the earliest evidence (in Eurasia) of this funerary phenomenon, the historical and cultural roots of which are still difficult to explain, decipher and trace back to their origins.

According to Lyonnet, the formation of the Majkop culture should be understood as the result of the interplay between the local earlier Chalcolithic substratum (*la composante Meshoko* which was partly related to the cultures of the northern Russian steppes) and the intrusions of cultural elements of

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1. Kohl 2007, p. 82.

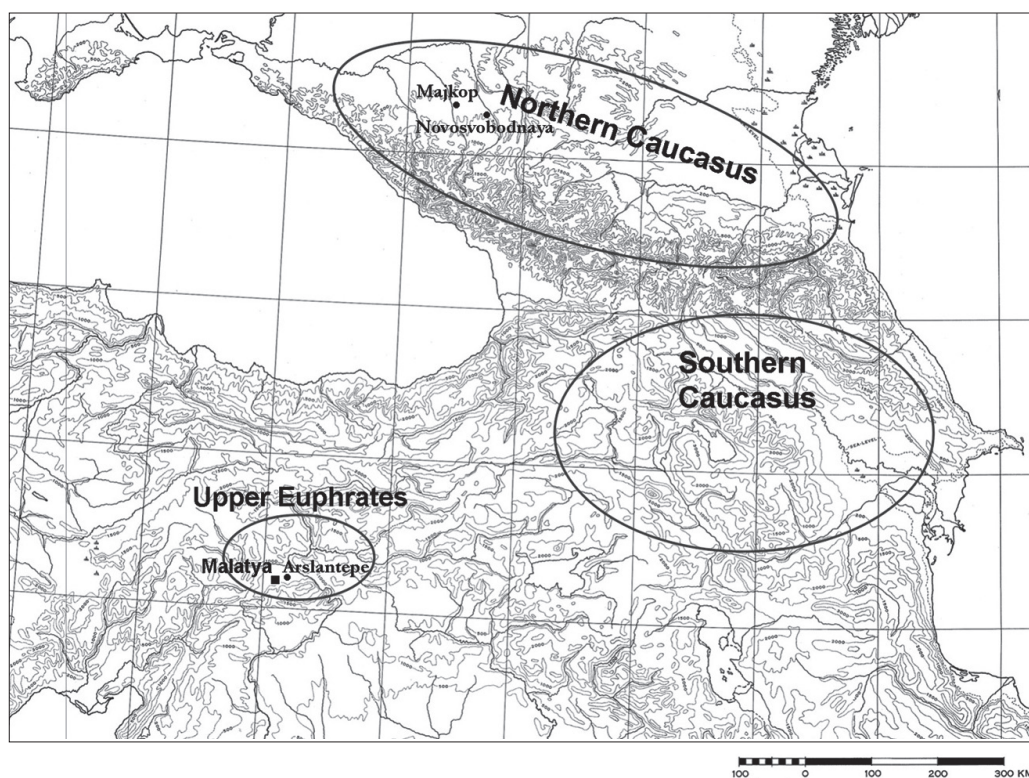


Fig. 1 – Geographical context of the main sites mentioned in the text.

Northern Mesopotamian origin; while the later Novosvobodnaya tradition represents a re-elaboration of the pre-Majkop traditions mixed with influences coming from the southern Caucasian Kura-Araks culture.²

Kohl has recently suggested the possibility of multiple origins for the Majkop-Novosvobodnaya tradition as the result of the role of intermediation (presumably related to the development of metallurgy) played by the Northern Caucasian communities with the cultures of the Eurasian steppes (*i.e.* the Kostantinovska culture and the western Kuban traditions) and the more southern ones (the Kura-Araks culture from the southern Caucasus and those from Mesopotamia).³

From a chronological point of view, the most recent ¹⁴C dates obtained both from burials and settlements pushes back the beginnings of the Majkop culture to the middle of the fourth millennium (and possibly even earlier), while the later Novosvobodnaya developments seem to cover the period between the last quarter of the fourth and the first half of the third millennium B.C.⁴

The archaeological picture available at the moment from the Northern Caucasus in this period shows a heavy imbalance between the large number of cemeteries and burials (which number between 150 and 250) and the rather small number of settlements (no more than 30) which have been excavated or discovered so far.⁵ What clearly emerges from this picture is that the evidence related to the world of the dead definitely outnumbers, in terms of visibility and endurance, that of the living.

The reasons for this disproportion can be easily understood by examining the nature, function and features of the latter. The settlements excavated so far (*i.e.* Chishkho and Galyugay) mainly consist of temporary, “light” and short-lived (often monophase) occupations with very thin anthropic deposits consisting of pits and wooden and wattle-and-daub dwellings.⁶

2. Lyonnet 2000, p. 301-304; Lyonnet 2004, p. 98-99; Lyonnet 2007a, p. 17; Lyonnet 2007b, p. 134-138, 150.

3. Sherratt 1997, p. 466; Courcier 2007, p. 218; Kohl 2007, p. 75-76.

4. Andreeva 1977, p. 55; Rezepkin 2000, p. 16-22; Lyonnet 2000, p. 307; Korenevskij 2004, p. 64-70; Lyonnet 2007a, table 1; Lyonnet 2007b, p. 137, 148, 149; Kohl 2007, p. 73; Ivanova 2008, p. 15-18.

5. Kohl 2007, p. 74.

6. Korenevskij 2004, p. 12-14; Lyonnet 2007b, p. 137, 146; Riond 2007, p. 182, 183; Kohl 2007, p. 76.

The range and the quantity of the materials recovered from the settlements is relatively narrow and, apart from pottery and some very rare metal objects, they are mainly represented by grinding tools, stone hammers and weaving tools employed either for domestic but also for more specialized activities such as the working and processing of mineral ores and animal skins, and textile production.⁷

These data suggest that agriculture could have played a minor role in the primary productive economy of these communities which was mainly focused on animal husbandry and its secondary products. More specifically, faunal data reveal a special focus on cattle, as at both Galyugai I (49%) and Yasenova Polyana (65%).⁸ In fact, the short-lived occupations and the “light” architectural remains fit well in an economic organization mainly based on pastoral activities which required periodic movements across the territory and a mobile approach to the land.

In contrast with the scanty and flimsy evidence of the settlements, the funerary structures, the often imposing burial mounds, stand out as permanent, time-enduring and visible monuments which contained and preserved the bodies of outstanding individuals who played representative and important social roles (presumably chiefs and the members of their families).

From an architectural point of view, the northern Caucasian kurgans are usually characterized by one or more external stone circles which circumscribed the perimeter where the earthen mound was built. The construction of these tumuli was certainly a rather complex process which required a considerable amount of raw materials (earth, pebbles and clay) and work-force.⁹ Probably this process was in itself part of the funerary ritual which conferred to the tomb the typical mound-like shape and its final physical visibility.

But not all the kurgans from this period had the same dimensions: some of them were relatively small but others were incredibly monumental like the notorious Majkop kurgan (which was 11m high) and some of the kurgans from the cemetery of Klady at Novosvobodnaya (kurgan 11 was 148m wide and 12m high and kurgan 31 was 67m wide and 4m high).¹⁰ Their dimensions were probably the result of a political ability (from social charisma to economic power) to mobilize work and collective labour (large households or entire communities must have taken part in their construction).

Still, in relation to their dimensions, it is important to note that, as is the case of the Kurgans from the cemetery of Klady at Novosvobodnaya, these funerary tumuli also record different stages of life and contributions to the physical growth of the tumulus (*fig. 2*).¹¹ This is because the construction of new tombs and the

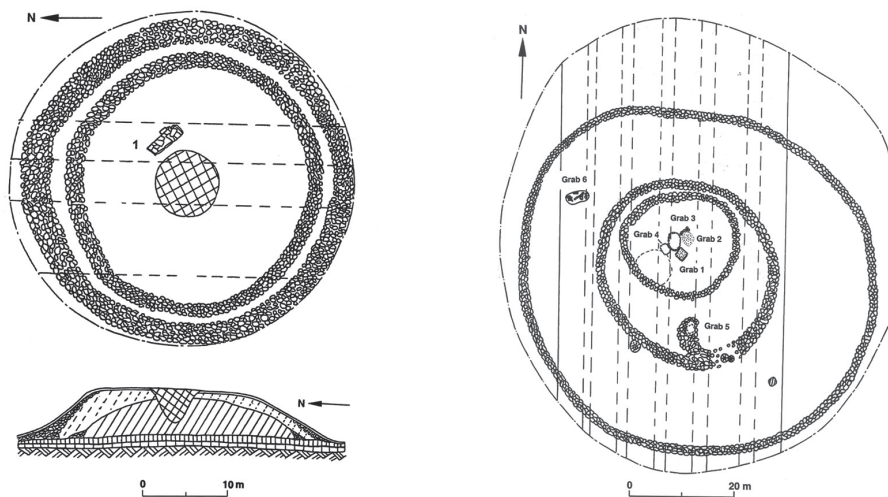


Fig. 2 – Kurgans 28 and 31 from the cemetery of Klady at Novosvobodnaya showing different phases of construction (after Rezepkin 2000, pl. 38, 49).

7. Lyonnet 2007b, p. 138; Hamon 2007, p. 192-196; Shishlina, Orfinskaya, Golikov 2003.

8. Kohl 2007, p. 76-78.

9. Koryakova 2000, p. 15-16.

10. Munchaev 1975, p. 212; Chernykh 1992, p. 67; Rezepkin 2000, p. 41, 62.

11. Chapman 1997, p. 36, 41.

deposition of new burials in an older kurgan also implied the cyclical reconstruction and the superimposition of a new mound (with new layers of earth and stones) which produced the progressive (and sometimes gigantic) enlargement of the primary monument (see for instance kurgans 11, 28, 31, 39, of the Klady cemetery at Novosvobodnaya).¹²

Continuity in the use of the same funerary mound produced a vertical stratigraphy composed of separate (but interrelated) funerary events (a sort of history and biography of the monuments) which transformed the kurgans into monumental means of visualization of the history of a family which physically and symbolically connected the concepts of kinship and descent to the surrounding territory.

The large variety of burial traditions which is attested in the kurgans, ranging from simple earthen-pits to wooden chambers, stone cists to complex megalith constructions, has often been interpreted in terms of a chronological development of this tradition (from the Majkop to the Novosvobodnaya cultural horizon).¹³ But it is also possible that the variability of the burial customs was not only the result of different traditions (and of separate social identities) but could also have expressed diversified forms of wealth and social power (the excavation of a simple shaft tomb would have required a minor investment in terms of labour and materials when compared to those necessary for a megalithic stone chamber).¹⁴ In general, the tombs hosted single primary burials but in some exceptional cases collective primary burials are also attested.¹⁵

Together with their monumental traits, the amazing and impressive concentration of metal objects and of precious grave goods in the funerary inventories is certainly another extraordinary and unique feature of the Northern Caucasian kurgans.

A rough estimate of the funerary goods contained in the kurgans of the Majkop and the Novosvobodnaya traditions counts thousands of metal artefacts which clearly underline how this funerary phenomenon coincides with and is probably related to a peak in the quantitative and qualitative development of metallurgical activities in the region.

Obviously, not all the kurgans contained the same impressive concentration of metal artefacts but in the wealthiest cases the array of grave goods is astonishing (the Majkop kurgan and the kurgans 30, 31 from Klady-Novosvobodnaya contained dozens of metal objects and hundreds of precious and semiprecious stone beads).¹⁶

Metal vessels (in gold, silver and copper), weapons, different kinds of working tools, body ornaments such as appliques and diadems (in silver and gold) and precious or semiprecious stone necklaces (gold, silver, carnelian, rock-crystal and turquoise) stress how these tombs represented (and the funerary tumuli preserved) the vertical social differentiation of these communities which was clearly expressed by means of a spectacular display of metal and luxury objects.

The main metals employed (gold, silver and copper) reflect the composition of the metalliferous deposits of the region (it was probably produced locally)¹⁷ and the bronze artefacts are composed of two main alloys: a traditional arsenical-copper alloy and a copper, arsenic and zinc alloy which is typical (and almost unique) of Northern Caucasian metallurgy from this period.¹⁸

The metal objects from the kurgans cover a wide range of functional categories ranging from weapons (swords, daggers and knives), vessels and containers (cauldrons) (*fig. 3*), tools for animal breeding (cheekpieces, hooks and pitchforks) and finally to other tools (such as axes, chisels and gouges) which were probably related to wood working and to deforestation activities (*fig. 8, 11*).¹⁹ The constant presence of these categories of objects in the funerary inventories clearly underlines the symbolic value attached to

12. Rezepkin 2000, p. 41-52, 57-59, 62-67, 68-70.

13. Rezepkin 2000, p. 5-9, 17-21.

14. Lyonnet 2007, p. 144, 145.

15. Munchaev 1975, p. 212; Chernykh 1992, p. 69; Rezepkin 2000, p. 63.

16. Munchaev 1975, p. 212-218; Chernykh 1992, p. 67-71.

17. Courcier 2007, p. 210, 218; Kohl 2007, p. 78-82.

18. Chernykh 1992, p. 74; Courcier 2007, p. 216-217.

19. Munchaev 1994, p. 198-213; Rezepkin 2004, p. 42-48; Lyonnet 2007b, p. 138; Connor, Sagona 2007, p. 34.

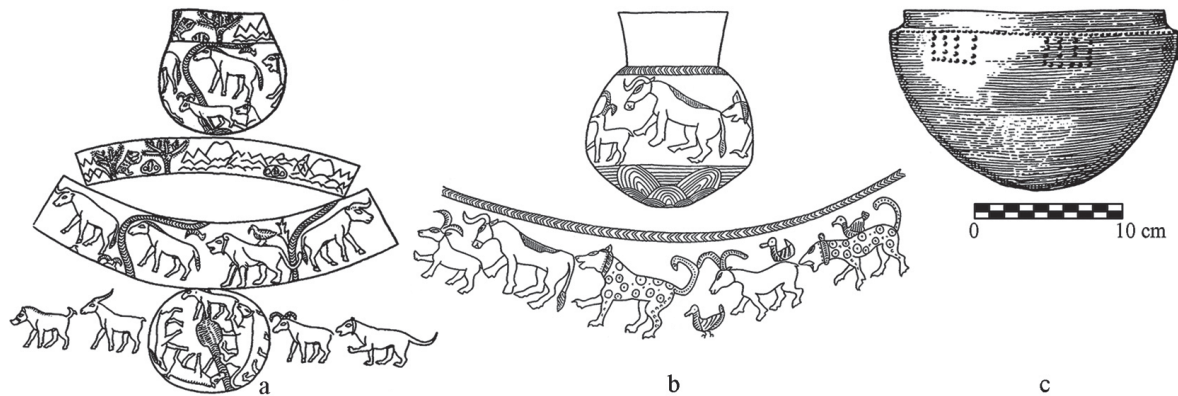


Fig. 3 – Metal vessels in silver (from Majkop) and one bronze cauldron (from Bamut)
(a, b from Munchaev 1975, fig. 37; c after Munchaev 1994, pl. 56).

their functions and to the role played by these activities in the social and productive environment of the Northern Caucasian communities.

The picture which emerges from the multiple aspects linked to the funerary tradition of the Northern Caucasian kurgans seems to express at least three levels of social differentiation:

- The physical dimensions of the tumuli were a materialization of the political and charismatic abilities of single individuals, households or communities, to mobilize collective labour;
- The unequal concentration of metal and luxury goods could measure different conditions of social status and rank, possibly deriving from the control exerted by the local chiefs and their communities over the specialized metallurgical activities (from the procurement of the raw materials to the production of the finished artefacts) and/or from the abilities to interact with regional or interregional networks of trade and exchange;
- Finally, the variability of the burial traditions (simple earthen pits, wooden chambers and monumental megalith constructions) could, on the one hand, reflect horizontal differences in terms of affiliation or membership to different social and cultural groups and, on the other hand, they could have again acted as status markers (and in fact the stone cists and the megalithic tombs generally contain the wealthiest funerary inventories).

The direct relationship, which is often recorded between the large dimensions of the kurgans, the architectural complexity of the tombs and the spectacular concentration of grave goods, points to the existence of a funerary ideology which wanted to emphasize the formation of internally hierarchised communities founded on vertical social relations.

The funerary traditions from the Northern Caucasus acted as a strategy for representing this unequal social organization which was projected and materialized into the territory through the construction of these tumuli which, as a means of physical and symbolic modification of the landscape, were in fact a strategy of naturalization of the inequalities structuring the social organization of these communities.

Exactly why these artificial mounds were chosen as the ideal monuments to express permanently and channel these socio-political messages of difference, power and inequality is a very difficult question. The most obvious answer is that in the gently sloping Caucasian landscape which merges into the Russian steppes, these mounds could have provided a clear physical and permanent visibility for the places (and houses) of the dead within a scale of visual values that emphasized the vertical perspective (in opposition to both the temporality of wooden houses and the “horizontality” of the settlements) in the construction of a funerary and socially stratified ancestral landscape.²⁰

20. Chapman 1997, p. 31, 36.

In what seems to have been a clear process of formation of a complex and internally differentiated society, territorial issues could have been of primary political importance. Kurgans could have represented socially recognizable monumental landmarks which optimally responded to the needs of a better definition and materialization of the political and territorial boundaries which had to be more permanently fixed as a consequence of the high level of mobility which pastoralism and cattle breeding required.

In this increasingly competitive political and social environment, kurgans, as a physical and symbolic expression of social and economic power, by containing the remains of the chiefs and their family members, could materialize kinship, shape collective memory, define geographical boundaries and strengthen political and group identities. By means of the physical and material links between death and the surrounding landscape, kurgans, by becoming “ancestral” places, could have validated territorial rights and legitimated control over local resources and interaction with the long-distance trade networks which passed through the region.

ARSLANTEPE AND THE UPPER EUPHRATES VALLEY IN THE FOURTH MILLENNIUM

In this same period, some 1000km to the south as the crow flies, Arslantepe (the Hill of the Lion) was among the largest artificial mounds and one of the main centres in the Upper Euphrates region (eastern Anatolia) (*fig. 1*). At that time Arslantepe was already characterized by the typical mound-like structure (at present 30m high over the Malatya plain) which typifies most of the archaeological sites of the Near East and which still represents one of the most distinguishing cultural, historical and “natural” features of the landscape of the region.

Tell, Höyük, Tepe, Choga, Blur and Gora (are words in different languages which indicate artificial archaeological mounds) are in fact an integral part of the near-eastern landscape (from southern Mesopotamia to the highlands of Iran, Anatolia and the southern Caucasus) which is the result of the physical stratification, accumulation and sedimentation of the cyclical process of human occupation, construction, destruction, abandonment and reoccupation of the same place through time.²¹ These artificial mounds, “*Reliquaries of the Landscape*” in S. Steadman’s words (2005), are in fact permanent landmarks and, indeed, timemarks which physically preserve the material traces of the human past and embody and represent the history of a place, thus playing an active role in shaping the socio-cultural identity of the living communities, building a sense of continuity and heritage with the past (in mythical, cultural and political terms) and symbolising at the same time the ancestral ties with the place and the surrounding territory.²²

In the second half of the fourth millennium, the Upper Euphrates valley, located at the geographical and cultural border between northern Syria, central Anatolia and eastern Anatolia/southern Caucasus, was the northernmost sector of a complex network of political, cultural and trade relationships – the so-called Late-Uruk phenomenon – which was connecting the first cities of the Mesopotamian alluvium to the more “peripheral” regions of Greater Mesopotamia.

At that time, on the southern slopes of Arslantepe a large public complex was built which hosted economic, religious and administrative activities managed by a local elite and carried out in connection with the growing development of these interregional relationships.²³ Economic centralization and practices of controlled redistribution allowed the local power group to control the regional economy in terms of mobilization of labour, exchange of goods and specialized production.²⁴

Pottery production, which closely recalls the contemporary southern Mesopotamian typological repertoires, was in the hands of specialized workshops, and the hoard of 21 weapons found in the palace, luxury goods with strong ideological connotations, shows that the centre was also playing an advanced role in the regional metalwork production and that the specialized metallurgists’ activities were strongly related to the prestige politics of an elite which was mediating between different networks of exchange (central Anatolia, eastern Anatolia and the

21. Steadman 2005, p. 287.

22. Chapman 1997, p. 39-40; Steadman 2005, p. 292-293.

23. Frangipane, Palmieri 1983a, p. 297-325.

24. Frangipane 1997, p. 49-70; Frangipane 2007, p. 475-477.

southern Caucasus) to channel raw materials, or semi-processed and finished goods, towards Syria and southern Mesopotamia.

New animal husbandry strategies were also adopted in this period as it is attested by the growing role of caprovines in the animal economy in possible connection with the development of a new sector of textile production.

Reiterated practices of transhumance and the growing demand for metal ores in this period could have encouraged the construction of more solid relationships with eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus, both rich in pastures and metalliferous deposits, opening in fact new fields of human and cultural interaction between these regions.

But the violent fire which destroyed the Arslantepe public building at the end of the fourth millennium marks (or was a reflection of) an internal political crisis which opened new ways and opportunities to interact and interfere (both physically and culturally) with the region (and the populations) of the Upper Euphrates for the Caucasian communities, whose interests had probably been attracted to the region.

ARSLANTEPE PHASE VIB1

At Arslantepe, the following phase VIB1 (3100-2900 B.C.) marks a strong cultural break with the earlier Syro-Mesopotamian traditions and it is a clear sign of the changing political and cultural climate of the period. The site is repeatedly but temporarily occupied by communities of local pastoralists living in wattle-and-daub dwellings.²⁵ The pottery, a mix of local and Kura-Araks traits, shows the strong connections between these groups and the southern Caucasian world.²⁶ The impressive expansion of the Kura-Araks culture, which is recorded across the whole of eastern Anatolia at the beginning of the third millennium, represents the historical prelude and the cultural environment in which the Royal Tomb of Arslantepe rests.

THE ARSLANTEPE ROYAL TOMB

The tomb (*fig. 4*), dated to 3081-2897 cal. B.C. (1 sigma) and 3308-2879 cal. B.C. (2 sigma), was built immediately after or during the last moments of phase VIB1 (that is when the site was abandoned or still hosted temporary or seasonal occupations) and is contemporary with the second phase of the Kura-Araks culture in the southern Caucasus and with the Novosvobodnaya kurgans from the Northern Caucasus.²⁷

The tomb was the scene of a complex and dramatic funerary ritual which highlights that profound changes were taking place in the region at the political, cultural and ideological level which stress the emergence of new forms of power, the deep impact of the Caucasian cultures over the region and the new ideological emphasis placed on funerary rituals in the collective values and social practices of the local communities.²⁸



Fig. 4 – The Arslantepe Royal Tomb (Archivio MAIAO).

25. Frangipane, Palmieri 1983b, p. 523-529.

26. Frangipane, Di Nocera, Palumbi 2005, p. 143-156.

27. Frangipane *et al.* 2001, p. 106-108; Palumbi 2007, p. 28, 38.

28. Palumbi 2004, p. 115, 119; Palumbi 2008, p. 148-155.

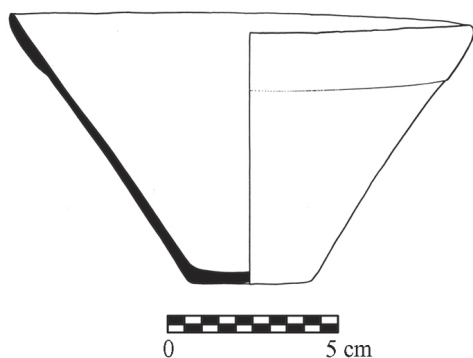


Fig. 5 – Metal bowl from the Royal Tomb (Archivio MAIAO).

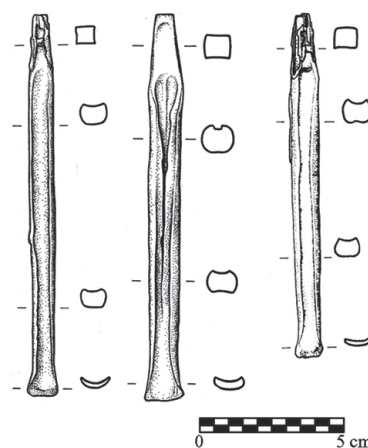


Fig. 6 – Chisels from the Royal Tomb (Archivio MAIAO).

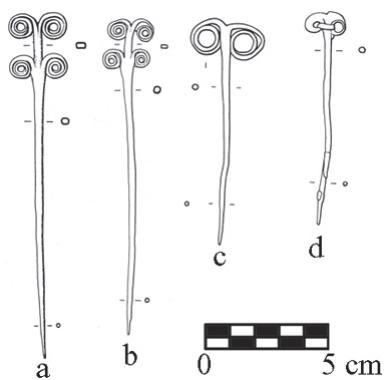


Fig. 7 – Quadruple and double spiral headed pins from the Royal Tomb (Archivio MAIAO).

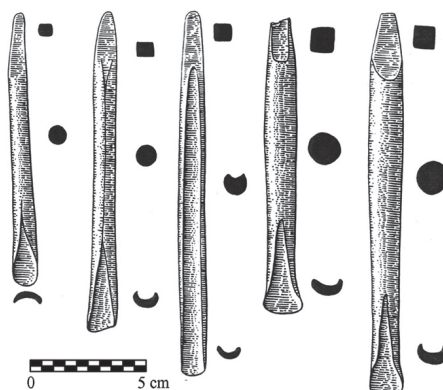


Fig. 8 – Chisels from the Novosvobodnaya cemetery (after Munchaev 1994, pl. 54).



Fig. 9 – One of the diadems from the collective burial S150 (Archivio MAIAO).

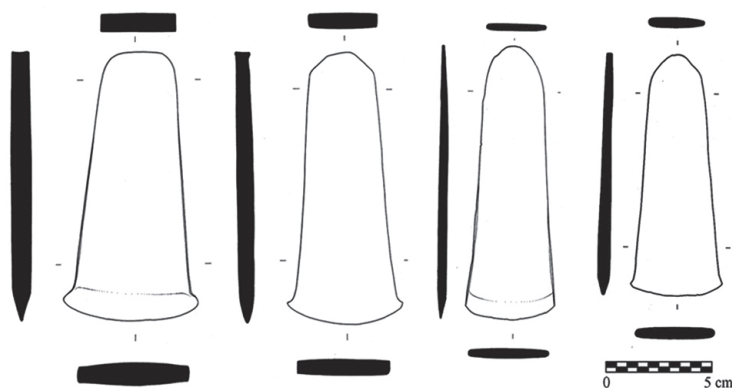


Fig. 10 – Flat axes from the Royal Tomb (Archivio MAIAO).

The ritual was subdivided in two different but closely interconnected moments: the upper collective burial S150 and the lower stone-cist T1.

The collective burial was the final and the most dramatic moment. It probably was the sacrifice of four young individuals who suffered violence and mistreatment for a few days before their deaths. The central couple (one girl and one boy) was adorned with body ornaments (double spiral-headed pins, hair-spirals and one diadem each) in a typical Kura-Araks style and southern Caucasian fashion (*fig. 7: c, d; fig. 9*) while the second and more marginal couple was without any ornaments, possibly indicating a lower social status.²⁹

The underlying stone cist contained the body of a man accompanied by an astonishing quantity and variety of grave goods: 65 metal objects (1 diadem, 2 four-spiral headed pins (*fig. 7: a, b*), 9 spearheads, 1 sword, 1 dagger, 3 knives, 4 axes, 2 chisels, 3 gouges (*fig. 6*), 2 containers and 37 bracelets, hair-spirals and rings), 14 ceramic vessels, 1 calcite bowl and 2 necklaces of silver, gold, carnelian and rock-crystal beads.³⁰

In comparison with the earlier funerary traditions, the tomb, with its unusual concentration of metal and precious objects, represents a totally new phenomenon.

In the Royal Tomb, different regional traditions relating to different cultural horizons coexist in a funerary representation where the past is as important as the present and where the old Uruk-oriented culture engages with new Caucasian influences, thereby reflecting a new climate of cultural fluidity.³¹

The leaf-shaped spearheads, for instance, are practically identical to those found in the public building of the earlier VIA phase. But at the same time, the stone-lined cist, which was the centre of the funerary representation, the double-spiral headed pins, the hair spirals and the diadems all belong to the traditions of the southern Caucasian Kura-Araks world.

Ceramics also take part in this past-present dialectic and the Plain Simple and Reserved Slip vessels, which represent a Late-Uruk heritage, coexist with the Red-Black burnished vessels in Kura-Araks style.

But the funerary inventory is also composed of a set of functionally heterogeneous objects which do not belong to the Uruk or Kura-Araks traditions. The sword, the dagger and the knives, flat axes, chisels, gouges and metal containers are all closely reminiscent of the same functional repertoires which typify the funerary inventories of the Northern Caucasian Kurgans.³²

What is more, the chemical composition of these objects (a copper-arsenic-nickel alloy), which is again another feature of Northern Caucasian metallurgy, helps to strengthen these interregional analogies.³³

In fact, it is the totally unusual concentration of metal artefacts in itself (not comparable with either the Kura-Araks or the funerary traditions of the Upper Euphrates), which has such close links with the wealthy funerary ideology of the Northern Caucasian Kurgans.

The specific set of artefacts borrowed from the latter was a symbolic selection linked to the functions, meanings and activities attached to objects which, probably better than others, could have represented the new models of power and those qualities which the new local chiefs wanted to emphasize and to identify with, in clear opposition to the older connotations of power which stressed more religious, administrative and bureaucratic traits.

Swords, daggers and knives stress the emergence of a new figure of “chief-warrior” and of new values (courage and strength) attached to warfare as an optimal solution to political and territorial conflicts.

The metal containers (*fig. 5*) could have been related to wine drinking (or to other alcoholic liquids) and to feasting activities (highlighting values of conviviality and generosity) as a means of peacefully negotiating internal social relationships.

Axes, chisels and gouges (*fig. 6, 10*) are clearly connected to timber working and to wood carving, thus expressing the importance of technical and craft skills in the production of the constructed environment and in the use of wooden architecture (rather common in the Caucasus and also witnessed in phase VIB1 at Arslantepe). But axes could also have been related to practices of deforestation and, in communities where specialized animal husbandry was playing a growing economic role (cattle in the Northern Caucasus and

29. Frangipane *et al.* 2001, p. 109-112; Palumbi 2004, p. 115.

30. Frangipane *et al.* 2001, p. 108, 109.

31. Palumbi 2004, p. 116, 119; Palumbi 2008, p. 146-148.

32. Palumbi 2007, p. 37-38.

33. Frangipane *et al.* 2001, p. 130-132; Hauptmann *et al.* 2002, p. 47-49.

caprovinces in the Upper Euphrates), controlled deforestation could have been a strategic activity carried out in order to acquire new areas to be exploited as grazing lands.

Finally, the concentration of prestigious metal artefacts which stylistically referred to different metallurgical traditions could have stressed not only the abilities of these chiefs to control specialized metallurgical production but also to interact with different systems of trade and exchange which could have represented an important social value in political terms.³⁴

Regarding the political and cultural identity of the man buried in the tomb, so far two hypotheses have been formulated.³⁵ The first is that he was the chief of a Caucasian community who died at Arslantepe or its surroundings while he was crossing the Malatya plain during the seasonal movements of transhumance. But the distance which separates the Upper Euphrates from the Caucasus and, at the same time, the deep knowledge of the past and present ideologies of power (and especially the ability to mediate and mingle them in a unitary funerary representation) rule out this hypothesis, thus suggesting that this man (and his community) was more probably local and that, in connection with the political upheavals and with the emergence of new forms and models of power (or with the restructuring of the old ones), he was trying to strengthen, justify and legitimize his current political position through a cultural re-orientation towards the Caucasian world and the adoption of new and exotic symbols of power.

The construction of the tomb on the artificial mound of Arslantepe was a sign that the site did not lose its symbolic importance and that it was still a “central place” in local geography, memories and territorial strategies. The burial of a chief in a monumental and historical place was an ideological, political and territorial act because, for the surviving community, this could have been a means to claim rights and acquire legitimacy to its physical occupation.

In Chapman’s words, the Royal Tomb of Arslantepe, if intended as an act of new foundation³⁶, could have allowed the old and abandoned mound “*to return to life*” and “*to restart the cycle of occupation, dis-use and reoccupation*” of the site.³⁷ This symbolic strategy was probably necessary in a historical contingency characterized by the collapse and fragmentation of the former model of centralised power and by the emergence of new elites which were reciprocally competing for the legitimate inheritance of the ancient authority. What is more, the growing economic role played by specialized animal husbandry among some of the local communities (which might have been characterized by a high territorial mobility, like in the case of phase VIB1), could also have required the construction of a set of more stable territorial landmarks.

The intense flux of people and cultural influences, which was spreading from the Caucasus to the surrounding regions in this same period and which was proposing new ideologies of power, different social and political models and probably also new conceptions of the territory and of the landscape (like for instance the symbolic, political and territorial role of the kurgans), could have provided the new chiefs with principles which better legitimated their economic and territorial strategies and their newly acquired positions of power.

The tomb was clearly a prestige and rank burial and the traits which it shared, with the Kura-Araks and with the Kurgan funerary traditions, highlight that the Caucasus had become a powerful political and cultural referent for some of the communities of the Upper Euphrates region. This new eastern cultural re-orientation and the construction of new social and political identities could have been a means to build new affiliations, partnerships and alliances and to escape from a potential condition of political isolation after a break in relationships with the more southerly regions (Syria and Mesopotamia).

But why was the mound of Arslantepe chosen as the optimal place to host this funerary event when the site was abandoned or only temporarily occupied?

Again, we have to reflect on the sense and the meanings attached to this place; on the way it looked in those days, on the symbolic and political function played in the landscape, on how it was perceived by the local populations and, finally, on the role it was playing in shaping their social and cultural identity.

34. Palumbi 2007, p. 37.

35. Palumbi 2004, p. 119; Palumbi 2008, p. 148.

36. Laneri 2004, p. 156-161.

37. Chapman 1997, p. 37.

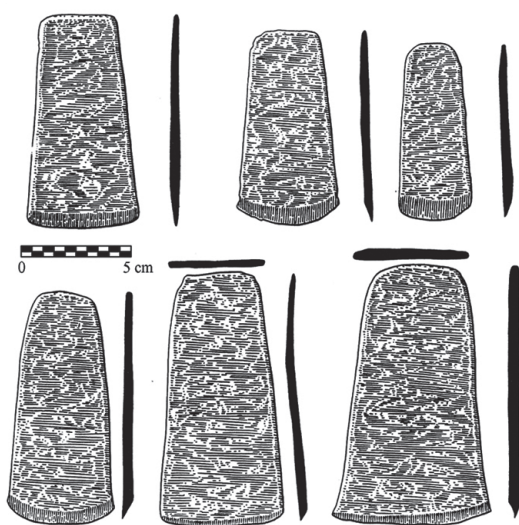


Fig. 11 – Flat axes from the Novosvobodnaya cemetery.
(after Munchaev 1994, pl. 54).

Maybe it was simply an abandoned hill of ruins belonging to a distant past without any meaningful connection to the events of the present. But the construction on it of a funerary structure with such strong ideological connotations suggests that the artificial mound was still conceived as a meaningful place, which preserved traces of the past and was a depository of historical memories.

It is probably because of this that the mound was chosen as the ideal place to bury the leader of a community. But to build an elite tomb on the top of the site was not only a means to claim territorial or occupation rights, but it was also certainly a way to create a new ancestral place in close symbolic and physical connection with past historical heritage.³⁸

The symbolic values which link artificial mounds (and ancestral places) and elite tombs are strongly reminiscent of the same principles which we observed in the Northern Caucasian kurgans. It has been suggested that kurgans, by containing the bodies

of the chiefs and of their family members, materialized kinship, shaped group identity and strengthened the relationships between descent and territory. But kurgans also acted as physical and monumental metaphors of the vertical social structure of these communities and as means of naturalization of the social and political relationships which, by “culturalizing” the territory, transformed it into a political and historical landscape.

Going back to the Royal Tomb, when the funerary structure was built, the site of Arslantepe was already a large and imposing mound, whose size and shape bore witness to the long duration of its history (fig. 12). Because of this, Arslantepe could have represented a truly ancestral place and the decision to build the Royal Tomb on the largest artificial mound of the plain could have been a re-interpretation (and in fact an ideological manipulation) of the same symbolic principles related to landscape, death and power which were enacted by the kurgans in the Northern Caucasus. Principles and codes were probably being transmitted from this region to Anatolia in a phase of intense communication flow between these regions and were being selectively adopted by the newly emerging groups of power of the Upper Euphrates.

The act of building an elite tomb in an abandoned (or a temporarily occupied) artificial mound, which looked-like a kurgan and which was in fact a “ready-made” tumulus embodying the same ancestral values as the kurgans, could have been the result of a process of symbolic translation which transformed the past ancestral mound into a present monumental tomb whose Northern Caucasian connotations transformed Arslantepe into the largest kurgan of the region: from the mound (and the house) of the living, to the monumental tumulus of a dead chief.



Fig. 12 – The hill (and the royal tumulus) of Arslantepe (Archivio MAIAO).

38. Palumbi 2007, p. 37.

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MYTHICAL VOYAGES AND ANCESTRAL MONUMENTS

TALES ON KNOWLEDGE AND LEADERSHIP IN PREHISTORIC EUROPE

Philippe DELLA CASA*

*To my academic teachers
Margarita Primas and Bernhard Hänsel
who opened the paths to Prehistory*

ABSTRACT

Journeys to the limits of the known world, and narratives on fabulous people, places and things form a common ancestral background in European, and in particular Mediterranean, mythology. Odysseus and the Argonauts are just the most famous of the actors known from epic tradition. On the other hand, alien objects found in distant places have for a long time triggered archaeological discussion about tradition, trade and cultural transformation. The paper investigates, with a focus on Late Copper Age burials in the Adriatic and the central Mediterranean, possible connections between the rise of local elites, distance voyaging, esoteric knowledge, cultural transformation, and the emergence of mythological patterns.

INTRODUCTION

“Cultural contact” is a term that has been used in archaeology for many years now to describe – though in an unspecific way – materially apparent co-evolutionary processes in prehistoric societies. Such processes typically include identical or similar objects (“imports”) and identical or similar social behaviours (*e.g.* “burial rites”) in different cultural settings. In the archaeological literature, we also often find terms such as “influence” or “transfer” to explain the presence of supposedly foreign elements of culture within specific contexts. Whereas the need for a critical and methodologically founded appraisal of these terms is evident in current approaches to cultural history, questions on exactly how human groups engage in cultural contacts, on what actually triggers such engagements, and on how their outcomes can be recognized and contextualized, remain difficult to address.

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It lies in the nature of archaeological science, that the problem of cultural contacts is usually investigated through studies of material culture, or materially tangible behaviour. This paper makes no fundamental exception to the rule; however, our setting will be slightly different from most material-based approaches to questions of contact, influence or transfer: it will in particular deal with the question, whether we can find elements other than material culture that would be reminiscent of wide-ranging cultural contacts, and how these would help to contextualise co-evolutionary processes by explaining the very offset of such contacts within the prehistory of the Mediterranean world. We will try to show that *myth* could be such a reminiscence.

The starting point then is a rather fundamental question: *what is the background of myth?* There can be no straight-forward answers to such complex questions, and admittedly, this paper will only deal with a very narrow field of investigation: *memory* as one of the key issues of archaeology (Olivier 2007). What we recognize from a brief survey of mythological constructs throughout the world is that myth often connects in one form or another to knowledge – typically to knowledge of esoteric nature: distant people (heroes, gods...), distant events, distant things – and explanation of how the world became what it is. The long-distance voyage as a source of knowledge is a recurring *topos* in myth, and typically addresses the question *where the world ends, and what comes beyond...*

More than 20 years ago, Mary Helms published an extensive anthropological survey on the topic of travelling for knowledge. Unsurprisingly, it is entitled *Ulysses' Sail*. The following passages illustrate very well the setting of our research:

In traditional societies esoteric knowledge has long been the select purview of political-religious elites. ... The anthropological understanding of the locus of esoteric materials, the "other worlds" of political-religious exotic experience, include the realm of geographical distance and the peoples, places and things found therein. ... Curiosity and desire for adventure, the search for knowledge, pursuit of fame and prestige, freedom from social constraints, punishment for social failings, and acquisition of tangible and intangible valued goods are all commonly cited in the ethnographic literature. ... Since elites' power itself is an "invisible mystery", ... the association or involvement of elites with "distance" of all sorts becomes an important part of the validation or legitimation of their positions. ... [Quotations from Mary W. Helms, "Ulysses' Sail" (1988), emphasis by the author].

THREE TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED, TO SET THE FRAMES OF REFERENCE

Before we turn in more detail to the Mediterranean world, three short "tales of the unexpected" will lead our journey back in time, and our quest for the roots of myth.

In early 15th c. Europe, Pierre d'Ailly gives a fabulous list of creatures inhabiting the outer realms of the world in his "Imago Mundi", following a tradition set by Plinius, Augustinus and Isidorus of Sevilla. Among the fantastic beings related in this book are the *Monoculi* ("single-eyed") and the *Kynokephaloi* ("dog-headed"), the *Panoti* ("all-ears") and single-footed *Skiapodes*, the fast *Hippopodes*, and the legendary *Pygmees* (Lestringant 1994; 2006). Christopher Columbus knew of this book on his journey to the Americas. Upon arrival on the north coast of Cuba, he notes in his logbook dated November 4th, 1492 – and obviously repeating information given by the local Arawak people about their neighbours – that "further on [to the east of the island], there were single-eyed men, and others with dog's heads that eat humans" (Estorach, Lequenue 1979, p. 94). A few days later, the *Monoculi* are associated with these man-eating *Canibales*, soon to become the most dreaded creatures of the west Indies (*fig. 1*).

Omai, young aristocrat from the island of Raiatea near Tahiti, embarks as an interpreter on one of Captain James Cook's ships during his second voyage to the South Seas in 1773 (Rendle-Short 2001). Back in London, Omai is introduced to British high society, where he successfully holds the role of a "noble savage", displaying tribal tattoos and south pacific behaviour. He travels all the way back to Polynesia and the Society Islands on Cook's third voyage, and finally settles – rich with exotic presents and experiences – in a European style house on the island of Huahine (*fig. 2*).

Some 4800 years ago, in the late Copper Age, a young man is buried in a stone cist under a large tumulus on the Adriatic shores of Boka Kotorska near Tivat in Montenegro (Primas, Raub 1992). At first sight, little can be said about his personal biography, but the valuable and highly exotic goods associated with his sumptuous burial clearly identify him as a member of the local elite (*fig. 3*). This funeral monument forms the starting point of our archaeological investigation.



Fig. 1 – Cannibalism in Brazil. Engraving by Theodorus de Bry, 16th c. (public domain).



Fig. 2 – Portrait of Omai by Francesco Bartolozzi, 1774, engraved by Nathaniel Dance (by permission of the British Library Board).



Fig. 3 – Late Copper Age central grave from Velika Gruda, Boka Kotorska, Montenegro (photo Dept. of Pre-/Protohistory UZH).

THE VELIKA GRUDA AND MALA GRUDA BURIAL MOUNDS IN MONTENEGRO

The Velika Gruda (VG) burial mound lies in the fertile coastal plain of Tivat, with easy access to the sea in a perfectly sheltered bay (*fig. 4*). It is associated with a second, similar mound – Mala Gruda (MG) – that yielded an analogous rich Copper Age grave, probably of a mature male. The two large mounds (each one *ca.* 20m in diameter and 5m high) originally formed an isolated pair of earthen monuments with elite burials, right in the centre of the alluvial plain. The situations and contexts have been extensively published and discussed (Parović-Pešikan, Trbuhović 1971; Primas 1996; Della Casa 1996), and thus need not be detailed for the purpose of this paper.



Fig. 4 – Plain of Tivat, Boka Kotorska, Montenegro, with localization of the Velika and Mala Gruda tumuli (photo Dept. of Pre-/Protohistory UZH).

The many similarities between the two burials, tumuli, and grave assemblages – crouched inhumations in stone cists covered by large earthen mounds (the VG tumulus was subsequently added to with a pebble stone cover in the Bronze Age), decorated local pottery items, valuable and exotic metal goods including identical gold rings – leave no doubt that the burials are separated by no more than a few generations, probably less.

Among the materials associated with the MG and VG burials are: a ceramic beaker and cups decorated in a specific east Adriatic style; a silver-copper alloy shaft-hole axe with golden cap – the type, if not the material, familiar to the Balkans –; a gold dagger of Levantine or – more likely – Anatolian origin, re-shafted several times as indicated by the rivet holes; gold rings from head dresses (*Lockenringe*, *Noppenringe*), one type in the MG burial, two different types – one also present in the Steno cemetery on Lefkas – in the VG burial; a copper flat adze; a small copper knife and a large double-edged knife – one of the earliest tin bronzes in temperate Europe, for which northeast Aegean connections can be supported (*fig. 5*) –; furthermore a cushion stone and two boar's tusks.

From our archaeological and anthropological point of view, three different, but related frames of reference appear possible in order to contextualize the Boka Kotorska and related elite burials (cf. Boljevića Gruda, Podgorica: Saveljić Bulatović, Lutovac 2003): the first one relates to *contact* and the presence of *exotic items* – many clearly of distant origins and foreign to the east Adriatic situation of the MG and VG discoveries. The second one pertains to the role of *seafaring* – evidenced in the geo-topographical setting of the monuments, and the places of origin of many objects present in the burials – though land connections should not be excluded (Primas 1998). The third one finally builds upon the *socio-political setting* of the burials – in which authors have argued in favour of an economic

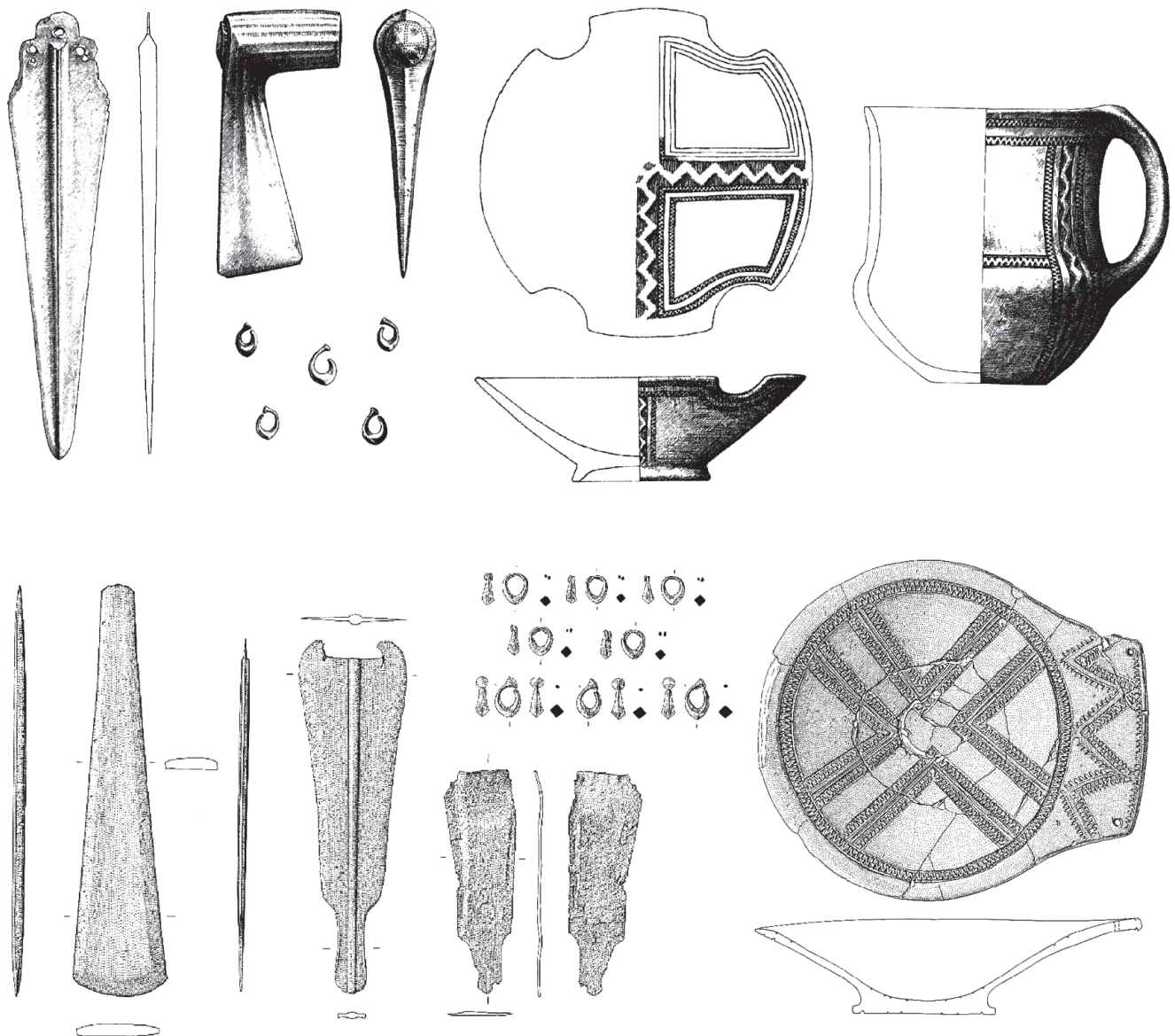


Fig. 5 – Valuable and exotic items from the Mala Gruda (top) and Velika Gruda (bottom) elite burials (from Primas 1996; scale: metals 1:3, ceramics 1:4).

background (cf. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005), or the existence of *inter-locking exchange networks* (Maran 2008). We will take a slightly different view: that of *elite distant voyaging* (eventually building upon Primas' 1996 idea of "free movers") and its role in the construction of early Mediterranean cognitive maps and relational networks.

ELITE VOYAGING IN GREEK MYTHOLOGICAL TRADITION

According to ancient Greek mythological tradition, heroes of (semi-)divine origin such as Jason and the Argonauts on their distant journey, Kadmos in his fight against the Illyrians, and wise and cunning Odysseus as well as the other actors of the Trojan War, were among the first humans to travel beyond the limits of the known world, to reach fabulous realms and to gain esoteric knowledge. This fantastic quest is particularly evident in the story of the *Golden Fleece* – possibly a mythical allusion to metallurgical

knowledge – but also in the many experiences relating to the *Underworld* – the archetype of “other worlds”. The omnipresent *topos* of travelling can be illustrated through modern mappings of supposed itineraries – rather hypothetical as in the case of the reconstruction of the *Argonautai*’s voyage (fig. 6) – but still worth keeping in mind because of its geographical extent in the light of the following discussion.

But then of course, we face a serious problem here: this is myth and epic tradition! And accordingly, the *Mikones* and *Lotophagoi*, the *Kyklopes* and *Sirens*, and of course, the man-eating *Laestrygon*es, are usually seen as products of fantasy and mythological constructs. However, as recalled in the first of our introductory tales, Christopher Columbus in the late 15th c. A.D. deemed it perfectly possible that he had missed the *Kynocephaloi*, the dog-headed, but certainly met the *Canibales*, the man-eating. Even if Columbus’ descriptions, influenced by Pierre d’Ailly (*supra*), can eventually be seen in line with a tradition of fantastic visions reaching as far back as classical antiquity, the ethnographic background to the logbook entries are most revealing: while Columbus thought to recognize the Latin *canis* in the word “cannibal”, *caniba* (or *cariba*) designates the Carib people of the Antilles in Arawak language – and the equation “caniba = man-eating” an insult of the Arawak towards their neighbours (Jurt 2002). Descriptions and insults of this kind have frequently resulted in ethnic designations (e.g. “eskimo” = Montagnais *ayassimew*: “snowshoe netter” – or possibly Ojibwa *ashkipok*: “raw eaters”; Goddard 1984 –).

Ballabriga (1998) discusses several examples of what he calls “ethnographic imaginations” in the context of the Homeric epic, in particular concerning the *Lotophagoi* and northern Africa, the *Phaiakes* and the island of Kerkyra, the *Laestrygon*es and their connection with Trinakria-Sicily, and the *Kyklopes*, which he relates to herders of Epirus and Illyria. Sometimes, it might even become possible to find archaeological traces relating to such phenomena, as in the case of the *Amazones* and the weapon-bearing female “warrior” burials of the Pokrovka cemetery in the Urals (Davis-Kimball 2002), or the named pastoralist *Cyclopes* of the east Adriatic coast (Mlekuž 2007).

It is thus possible to hypothesize that, from an anthropological point of view, the exotic creatures inhabiting the outer spheres of the world – both in ancient mythical tradition and sometimes in much more recent reports – may well not simply be mental projections of fear and fantasy into the unknown, but rather reflections of descriptions, insults, and *on dits*, resulting from remote contacts with exotic people, and handed down over distances and generations as a factual background.

THE *NOSTOS* OF ODYSSEUS: FICTION ON A FACTUAL BACKGROUND?

Mythical voyaging is the core topic of Odysseus’ *nostos* reported in the *Odyssey*, the only *epos* surviving from the Epic Cycle of the Trojan heroes’ “returns home” (Burgess 2004). As we are dealing with myth and epic, *historicity* is not usually among the many issues debated in regard to the *Odyssey*, such as the narrative framework, temporal setting, or sequence of tradition. However, as Ballabriga (1998) has prudently shown in his “fictions d’Homère”, while the persons remain fictitious, one should not readily dismiss the problems raised by mythical geography in ancient Greece. Would it thus be possible to imagine a reality behind the myth of long-distance voyaging?

Roughly speaking, there are two groups of partisans: those who, like Eratosthenes, argue that “anyone who really wanted to trace the itinerary of Odysseus had better first look for the cobbler who made him the bag of winds...” – and those who, following the tradition set by the Roman historiographer Strabo, believe that at least some of the places and itineraries of the *Odyssey* reflect geographical knowledge (Engels 1999, p. 115). Among the latter, Severin and Cuisenier hold a particular position: they successfully sailed parts of Odysseus’ voyage following maritime directions, which were sometimes astonishingly precise (Severin 1987; Cuisenier 2003). To a certain extent, therefore, they conclude that navigational skills could – or indeed must – have given rise to the narratives which were to be eventually recorded in the Homeric *epos*.

There have been innumerable attempts to imagine, reconstruct and, in fact, trace Odysseus’ *nostos* on geographical maps (e.g. van der Heyden, Scullard 1959), none of which – just as in the case of the *Argo*’s



Fig. 6 – Mythical voyage of Jason and the Argonauts on a Carthesian background (based on a map by Lawrence Kim, University of Texas at Austin).

voyage – can be conclusive. Indeed, scaled maps such as those usually presented in atlases (cf. *supra* and fig. 6) are a fallacy: any geography of Homer would most probably look rather like a hellenocentric mind map, a cognitive chart such as the one published in Watson 1956 (fig. 7), where the fringes of the known world could easily be surrounded, or virtually inhabited, by the fantastic.

On a much more regional scale, but still addressing the topic of mythical geography in epic literature, the question of whether *Ithaka* – Odysseus’ home island in the epos – corresponds to a real place again has kept many scholars occupied since antiquity. Bittlestone, one of the latest authors on the theme, published in 2005 a thrilling

idea to resolve an enigma discussed since Strabo’s times: the apparent contradiction between the actual geomorphology of the island of Kefalonia, west of modern Ithaka, and the description of Odysseus’ island in the *Odyssey*. According to Bittlestone, *ancient Ithaka* is to be located on the Paliki peninsula west of Kefalonia, originally separated from the main island by a narrow sea channel now filled with landslide; a hypothesis that most recently has been corroborated by extensive geoscientific investigation (Underhill 2008).

Again then, Homeric geography could prove to be based on a factual background. So, if Odysseus lived on the Ionian island of Ithaka, what would he have known as “the world”? This question appears rather difficult to answer, as our only source of information would be the epos itself, resulting in the above mentioned mind map of Homeric geography. Let us thus return to our second introductory tale at this point.



Fig. 7 – “The world” according to Homer’s *Odyssey* (based on a map published in Watson 1956).

James Cook's travel diaries and related sources on Raiatean arii *Omai* do not give precise indications about his geographical knowledge. However, Omai was not the only young local man to embark on European vessels in Polynesia: in 1769, during Cook's first voyage, another man from Raiatea, a priest named *Tupaia* had also, as an interpreter and guide, gone on board of the *Endeavour* (Williams 2003). His navigational skills and remarkable geographical knowledge were reported by naturalist and botanist Sir Joseph Banks, Cook's companion: "...but what makes him more than any thing else desirable is his experience in the navigation of these people and knowledge of the Islands in these seas; he has told us the names of above 70, the most of which he has himself been at" (Beaglehole 1962, p. 312). Unfortunate Tupaia never went back to the Society Islands: he died in Batavia in November 1770, as did others among James Cook's men.

A chart of Polynesian islands drawn by Tupaia for Cook in 1769 shows 72 islands centred around Tahiti, and reaching from the Australs to the Tuamotu and Marquesas, Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa group, some 1000 miles downwind to the northwest (Beaglehole 1955, pl. 11; Lewis 1994, p. 345) – obviously as far as Tupaia "knew the world" in a dynamic cognitive map. While this piece of Pacific cartography might, at first sight, appear rather off-topic in our debate on Mediterranean mind maps, there are nevertheless some striking connections: ancient Polynesia is an universe of islands and seafaring, just as many regions of the Mediterranean appear to be in Prehistory; from a socio-historical point of view, traditional Polynesian societies – usually described as "complex chiefdoms" or "*sociétés à richesse*" – share many features with those of the European Metal Ages (Testart 2005; Gally 2006); finally, the local protagonists engaging with European travellers are all young men of aristocratic, elite families, and perfectly meet Mary Helm's scenarios.

But Tupaia's map has even more to offer: while it has often been regarded as being "such a mess" because of its apparent lack of Cartesian geographic skills (see Turnbull 2004 with older literature), a contextual new reading proposed by di Piazza and Pearthree has shown that the map – obviously based on the concept of "star and wind compasses" known from Pacific offshore navigation traditions using currents, winds, and stars – is in good accordance with modern bearings and distances, and should be understood as "a mosaic of *subject-centred* sailing directions or bearings to distant islands" (di Piazza, Pearthree 2007, p. 324, emphasis by the author –), in the same way as many of the navigational indications in the *Odyssey* would appear to be.

Of the various roots and origins we can assume for the ancient Greek epos and its underlying oral traditions, we would thus retain three elements: real experience in seafaring and navigation, long-distance contacts and cognitive maps, and eventually ideological transfers and the construction of collective memories. The questions then are: when and where does this process start? And who would the early exponents of such a process be?

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION MAPS AND EPIC MYTHICAL VOYAGES

What we are looking for at this point of the discussion is an archaeological (mind) map that could somehow match the image of mythical voyages in the epos. Archaeological distribution maps for example are a powerful tool to illustrate spatial patterns of phenomena and objects in time and sequence. If we look at the geographical connections indicated by the exotic materials in the Velika and Mala Gruda burials (*fig. 8*), could we not imagine reading them as a "European landscape of early contacts and voyages"? And what about the striking similarities of such a distribution map with cartographic settings of epic voyages such as the one of the Argonauts (*fig. 6*)? Among the areas covered by our distribution map, though the Aegean Sea plays an important role, the factual background rather appears as an overall Mediterranean experience; it is not as hellenocentric as the cognitive charts we can draw from later Greek epic tradition. However, the areas involved remain the same: the islands of the northern Aegean, west Anatolia, the Black Sea, the Danube and the Adriatic Sea, possibly the central Mediterranean islands.

The Greek epos, of course, takes us to a much later time period: to the "Homeric Age" – the descriptions of the *nostos*, however, the remoteness of the people and places described (*supra*), and the obvious lack of geographical knowledge beyond the Aegean Sea, seem to have little in common with the situation of the 8th/7th centuries B.C., when Greek colonization in the central Mediterranean was progressing rapidly (Malkin 1998) (we must acknowledge, however, that as late as the era of Herodotus,

geographical notions of the regions of the Danube and beyond the *Caput Adriae* remained very limited: Verger 2006). Even if we consider that an older “heroic past” – a Mycenaean tradition – underlies the Homeric epic narrative, as is often assumed, we do not get a matching picture: the Near East and the central Mediterranean, even the Tyrrhenian Sea, were not “terra incognita” to the Greeks in the Late Bronze Age, if we may argue from the intense and widespread distribution of Mycenaean pottery in particular, as well as from many more “contact finds” (for a recent evaluation see Vianello 2005); trade and seafaring must have been a rather common business in the later 2nd millennium as evidenced by the Uluburun shipwreck (Yalçin, Pulak, Slotta 2005).

Maran (2008) has shown in a remarkable paper that the centuries before and around 2000 B.C. are an important formative period in Mediterranean connectivity and mental mapping. In our context, relationships between the Adriatic and Aegean Seas are of particular interest: the spread of *Cetina* style pottery may be cited, along with bossed bone plaques, bone toggles, terracotta figurines and weapons. Many of these “contact finds” are from graves and ritual deposits; however, their distribution patterns, in particular concerning pottery (cf. Maran 2008, pl. 3), do not appear as exclusive and highly directional as those of the early 3rd millennium (cf. fig. 8), and the relationship with elite behaviour such as in funeral ritual, is certainly less pronounced.

We would like to draw the attention to one more phenomenon of the European sphere, in order to corroborate our view that it is the early 3rd millennium B.C. that must be seen as the origin of Mediterranean mythic traditions of long-distance navigation and select cultural transfer: the so-called *statue stelae* of the late Chalcolithic. First of all, their pattern of distribution – including the Levant and southeast Anatolia, the north Pontic zone, the Aegean, the Carpathian basin, the central Mediterranean, and the Alps beyond the *Caput Adriae* (Mezzena 1998, map I) – is highly reminiscent of our 3rd millennium map of Transeuropean connections (fig. 8). Mezzena had already in 1998 argued in favour of hypothetical relationships between the mythical voyages of Jason and Kadmos, and the spread of statue stelae with a common iconography (Mezzena 1998, map III).

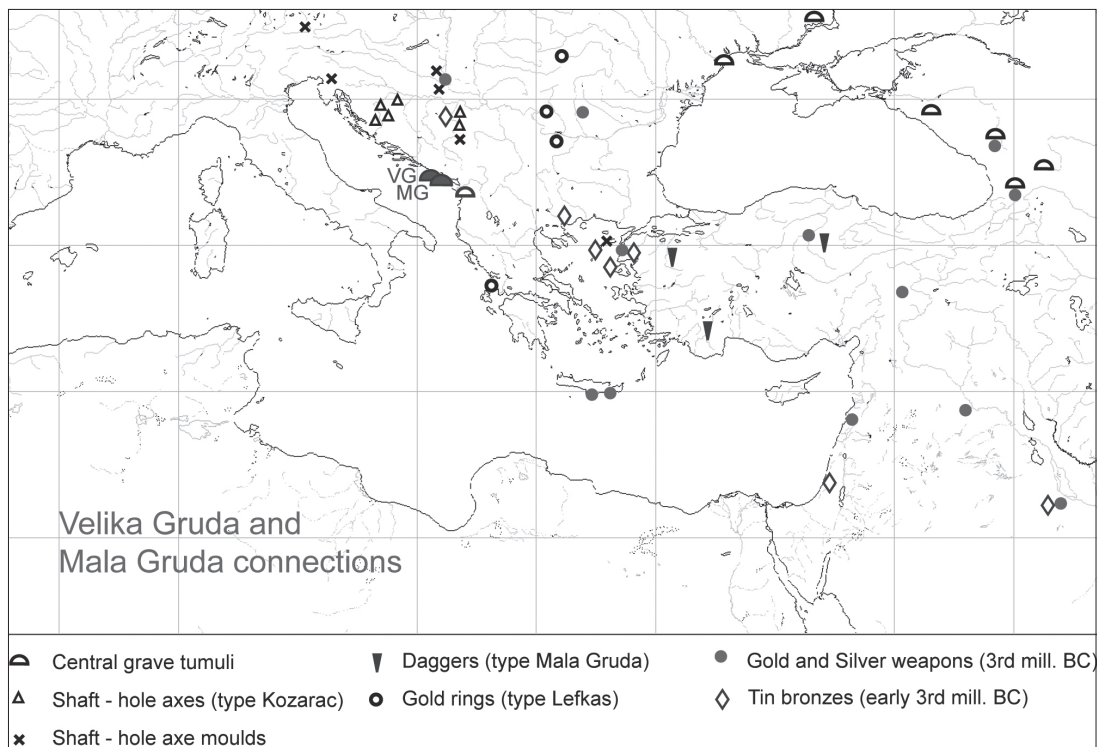


Fig. 8 – Map of possible provenances and spatial relations of the objects and phenomena found in the Mala Gruda and Velika Gruda burials (after Primas 1996; Pare 2000; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005; Maran 2008).

The stelae will not be considered here in stylistic or chronological resolution but rather as elements of elite status representation and ideological transfer. Stelae as geographically distant as those of Kernosovka (Mezzena 1998, p. 134) and Arco I (Mezzena 1998, p. 156) share an astonishingly similar set of iconic and/or symbolic elements, including anthropomorphic shapes, clothing and ornaments, and multiple weapons such as axes, knives or daggers – the very same objects that appear as elite status markers in contemporaneous graves. As Harrison and Heyd (2007) have discussed, they form an integral part of what they call the “Yamnaya Package”, a set of socio-ideological constructs, manifested in material culture that spreads across wide areas of Europe in the context of important cultural transformations of the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C. (Harrison, Heyd 2007, fig. 45-48, p. 193-203).

Where archaeological contexts are known, the statue stelae seem to be linked tightly to elite burials and ancestral monuments (*e.g.* Sion, Petit-Chasseur in Switzerland: cf. Harrison, Heyd 2007); as such, they can be understood as *archetypes* of high status individuals, such as “the warrior” or “the chief” – those people we would expect to engage in adventure, discovery, and distant voyaging, following Mary Helm’s line of arguments.

CONCLUSIONS – OR: THE ROOTS OF MYTH?

In order to summarize, albeit briefly, this enquiry into the origins of European myths of voyage and knowledge, we will once again take an extensive comparative approach within a wider frame of reference: that of elite actors in quest for esoteric knowledge and exotic items.

As reflected in Greek epic tradition, and seen from a point of view of cultural anthropology, mythological constructs pertaining to long-distance voyaging and esoteric knowledge can be seen to be based both on distinguished geographical and maritime settings as well as on a factual background, and on archetypal situations, such as the fictitious journeys to the underworld, and to “worlds beyond” in a more general sense.

The areas covered in these mythical voyages match cognitive maps that one could imagine as the “known world” of the early 3rd millennium in the Mediterranean, as recognizable in the spread of exotic objects of the kind known from elite contexts such as the Boka Kotorska burial mounds. Clearly, several “spheres” interact in these early Mediterranean networks: the Black Sea and the Danube, the Aegean, and the Adriatic and central Mediterranean Seas.

The elite burials, with their very selective assemblages, highlight the importance of single actors in the development of such European networks, in which elite ideology of social status and prestige was an element of cultural transfer. Moreover, they illustrate the role – in terms of social integration – these actors must have played within their communities, their tombs becoming “ancestral monuments” in the landscape.

What we suppose to be recognizable in these phenomena is what we may call the *underlying structure* to myth – not necessarily to epic tradition, but to Mediterranean myth in a wider sense, of which the Greek epos in the 8th/7th c. B.C. would appear as a much later, specifically *Aegean* completion.

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RÉFLEXION SUR L'ESPACE FUNÉRAIRE ET LA NOTION DE TERRITOIRE EN ASIE CENTRALE STEPPIQUE AUX PÉRIODES PROTOHISTORIQUES (II^e-I^{er} MILLÉNAIRES AV. J.-C.)

FUNERARY SPACE AND THE IDEA OF TERRITORY IN STEPPIC CENTRAL ASIA
IN THE PROTOHISTORICAL PERIODS (2ND-1ST MILLENNIA B.C.)

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RÉSUMÉ

La notion d'organisation sépulcrale dans l'espace interne du cimetière et sa place dans le territoire qui s'étend au-delà de la nécropole restent difficiles à traiter en archéologie. Effectivement, aux classiques questions de superposition stratigraphique des tombes et/ou des structures funéraires, se rajoutent celles de l'agencement des constructions, volontaires ou non, réalisées dans l'antiquité par les fossoyeurs, architectes malgré eux d'un "urbanisme" complexe à l'intérieur du cimetière. Dans une perspective plus globale, l'analyse topographique de l'emplacement de la nécropole montre non seulement qu'elle peut marquer une zone occupée (interne à la nécropole) ou d'occupation territoriale (à un niveau plus vaste de propriété) mais aussi un ensemble symbolique et sacré, lieu de "congrégation" des bâtisseurs en accord supra-naturel avec la géographie locale.

ABSTRACT

The idea of tomb organization within the space of a cemetery and its place in the territory that extends beyond the necropolis is difficult to deal with in archaeology. Indeed, to the classic questions of stratigraphical superimposition of the graves and/or the funerary structures are added those concerning the layout of the constructions, voluntary or not, that were carried out in antiquity by the gravediggers, architects in spite of themselves of a complex "urbanism" within the cemetery. In an overall perspective, topographical analysis of the location of the necropolis shows not only that it can indicate a zone that is occupied (internal to the cemetery) or that is part of a territorial occupation (in a wider sense of land ownership), but that it is also a symbolic and sacred whole, a place of "congregation" of the builders in supra-natural harmony with the local geography.

Durant les âges du Bronze et du Fer, le vaste territoire des steppes centrasiatiques a été occupé successivement par des communautés de la culture d'Andronovo puis par des populations de la culture Saka.¹ Il existe une filiation avérée, culturelle (Akishev et Kushaev 1963) et biologique (Bendezu-Sarmiento 2007), entre les populations de l'âge du Bronze (II^e millénaire av. J.-C.) et celles de l'âge du Fer (X^e-III^e s. av. J.-C.) des steppes. Les grandes nécropoles, mises au jour depuis des décennies,

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1. La première culture se développa sur un ensemble territorial très vaste allant des monts ouraliens à l'ouest, l'Ienisseï à l'est, la région d'Omsk au nord et celle de la mer d'Aral au sud. La culture Saka s'étend du centre du Kazakhstan, au Xinjiang en Chine, la mer d'Aral au sud et jusqu'à la Mongolie à l'est.

en témoignent, par une structure globale et des dépôts funéraires très similaires. Néanmoins, il existe des dissemblances liées aux changements socio-économiques : les populations Andronovo du Bronze sont essentiellement des agriculteurs-éleveurs sédentaires (à la fin du Bronze, semi-nomades), tandis que les Saka de l'âge du Fer pratiquent déjà un nomadisme pastoral monté.² L'émergence de cette nouvelle entité socio-économique s'explique par un changement environnemental,³ ainsi que par une croissance démographique et un développement technologique.

Basé sur des travaux récents d'analyse systématique d'un abondant matériel archéologique et anthropologique qui provient de toute la partie centrale et orientale du Kazakhstan actuel (Bendezu-Sarmiento *et al.* 2007), cet article n'a pas la prétention d'être exhaustif, mais simplement de proposer diverses hypothèses sur l'occupation de l'espace et son rapport avec l'organisation mortuaire.

LES TOMBES DANS L'ESPACE FUNÉRAIRE ET LE RECRUTEMENT

La norme des tombes de l'âge du Bronze correspond à des inhumations plutôt individuelles et rarement multiples, à l'intérieur d'un contenant étanche en pierre et/ou en bois, ou encore en simple fosse. L'individu était en décubitus latéral avec les membres fléchis et le corps orienté vers l'ouest (*fig. 1b, 1c*). À l'extérieur, on trouve une enceinte (plutôt qu'un kourgane à proprement parler) de forme carrée ou circulaire de 5 à 10 m de longueur/largeur ou de diamètre. Ces enceintes, constituées de dalles juxtaposées, indiquaient que la tombe se situait souvent au centre. Vers la fin du Bronze, les pratiques se diversifient, tant dans le domaine funéraire que dans l'architecture avec des monuments plus grands et plus complexes, contenant plusieurs fosses sépulcrales (*fig. 1a, 1d*). Les kourganes (en pierre et/ou en terre) apparaissent avec l'âge du Fer à la fin du II^e millénaire av. J.-C. Généralement, ils n'étaient constitués que d'une fosse sépulcrale au centre, avec des contenants divers aussi bien en pierre (pour les anciennes périodes) qu'en matériaux organiques. À l'intérieur, l'inhumé était en décubitus dorsal avec les membres supérieurs le long du corps et les membres inférieurs parallèles à l'orientation du corps (*fig. 2*).

L'analyse intra-site montre que la "création" d'un espace sépulcral exige, au départ, un centre ou un point fixe, à valeur privilégiée et symbolique, à partir duquel l'orientation des diverses constructions va être définie. C'est autour de ce point de départ (espace premier mais pas forcément central par la suite) que se développe un espace secondaire multiple, postérieur, qui va marquer l'occupation de la nécropole dans son ensemble. Ce point premier se trouvait souvent à un endroit géographiquement stratégique. À l'intérieur de la nécropole, cela se traduit par des alignements divers, des superpositions et autres groupements visibles sous formes variées (*fig. 3*). Ces associations de constructions, souvent contemporaines, sont accompagnées de gestes techniques ou codifiés à valeur symbolique dont les traces archéologiques sont parfois visibles lors de la fouille.

Durant la longue chronologie traitée, il existe une continuité dans la superposition des différents groupements de constructions ou des structures à l'intérieur d'un même cimetière. La longue utilisation, avec le même savoir-faire, d'un même lieu (notamment au Bronze), avec un respect pour les périodes précédentes, témoigne de la persistance remarquable d'une tradition locale dans les constructions. Divers témoignages archéologiques montrent comment les fossoyeurs, par des pratiques d'inhumation secondaire, pouvaient prendre soin des os dérangés.

2. Les recherches actuelles développent l'idée de l'établissement d'un nomadisme plus ancien, mis en place dès la fin du Chalcolithique et déjà bien établi durant l'âge du Bronze. Ceci expliquerait la grande expansion territoriale cohérente et culturelle de cette société Andronovo (cf. note 1) " toujours en mouvement ".

3. Il semblerait que l'Asie centrale ait subi, depuis la préhistoire, et plus particulièrement à l'âge du Bronze, un assèchement qui eu comme conséquence la réduction du niveau des lacs de montagnes, accompagné d'un tarissement des petites rivières et ruisseaux dans la zone des steppes (Boroffka *et al.* 2006).



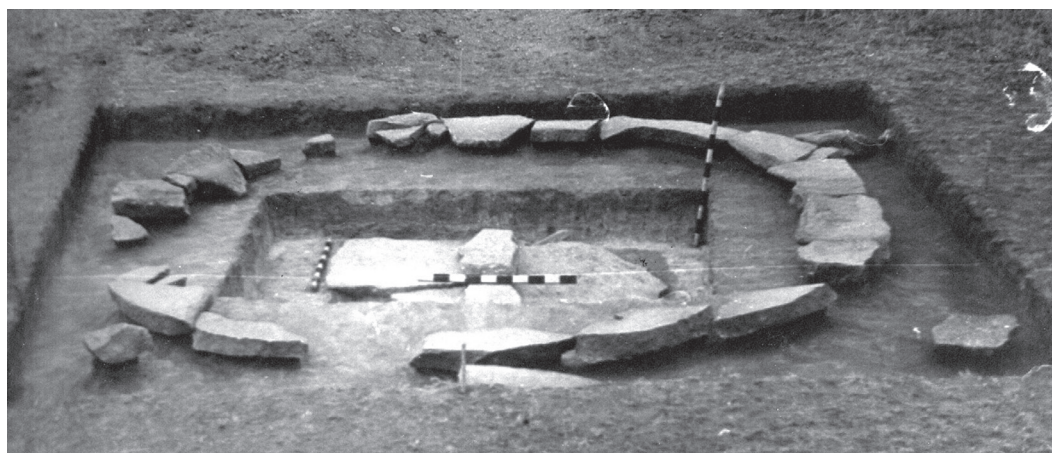
a



b



c



d

Fig. 1a-d – Sépultures et structure funéraire à l'âge du Bronze au Semirech'e au Kazakhstan.
Photo : Gorjachev et Marjashev.

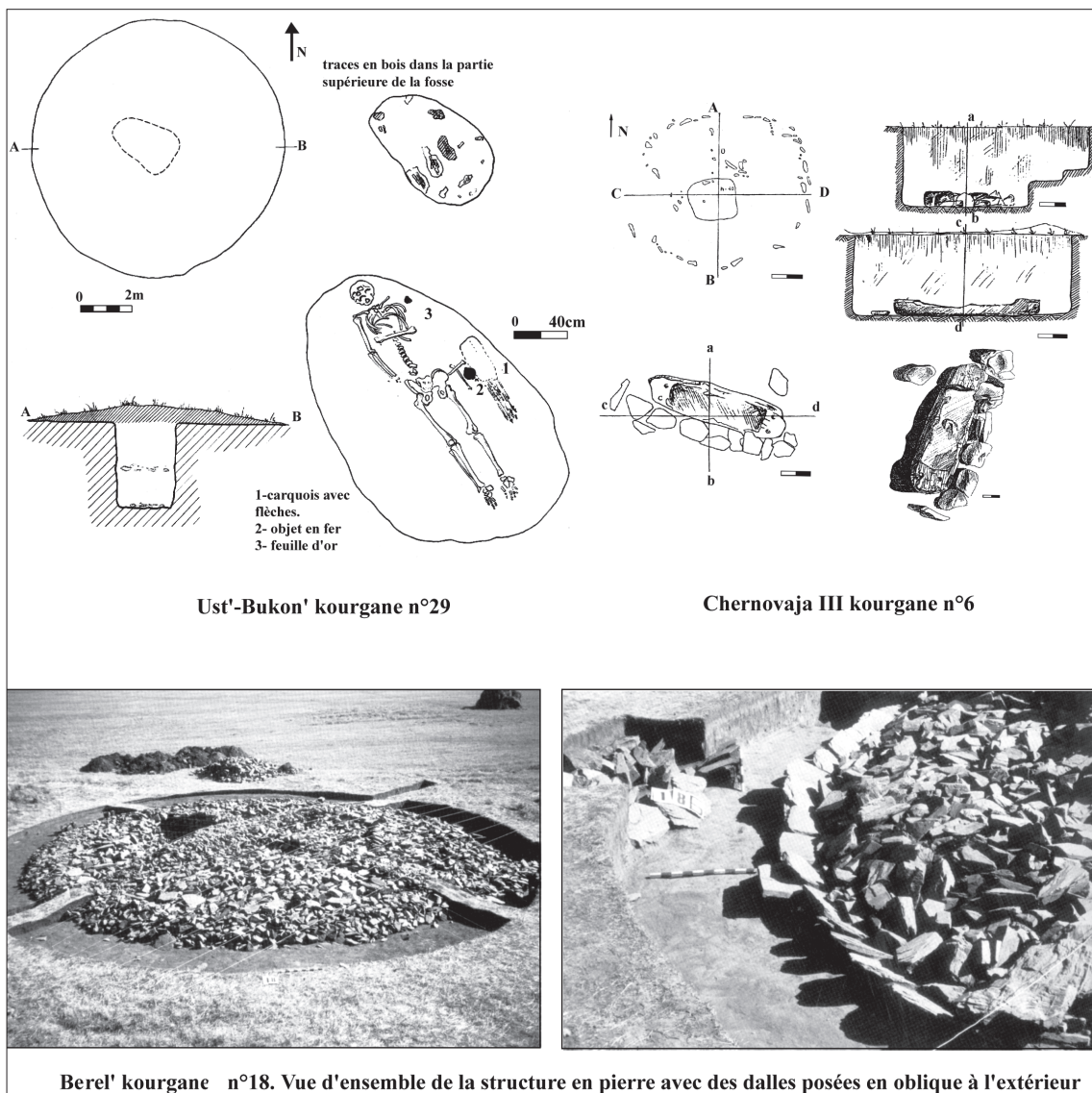


Fig. 2 – Sépultures et structure funéraire à l'âge du Fer au Kazakhstan oriental (d'après Bendezu-Sarmiento et al. 2007, pl. 11a).

Néanmoins, une étude poussée de l'urbanisme interne reste difficile à réaliser, principalement en raison des pillages anciens et récents qui atteignent plus de 60 % des tombes trouvées dans les nécropoles (Bendezu-Sarmiento *et al.* 2007).⁴

Dans les plus grandes structures (Bendezu-Sarmiento, Grizeaud 2010), certaines pratiques funéraires particulières ont été relevées, comme la multiplicité des inhumations d'enfants autour de la fosse centrale occupée par un adulte. La nature de la relation, de parenté ou autre, avec l'inhumé principal n'est pas établie, mais leur concentration (autrement, les tombes d'immatures sont rares) donne à réfléchir sur la notion même de "mort d'accompagnement" (Testart 2004)⁵ et sur la place des enfants dans ces sociétés anciennes. Effectivement, au niveau du recrutement, il existe des pratiques différentes en fonction des classes d'âge. À l'âge du Bronze,

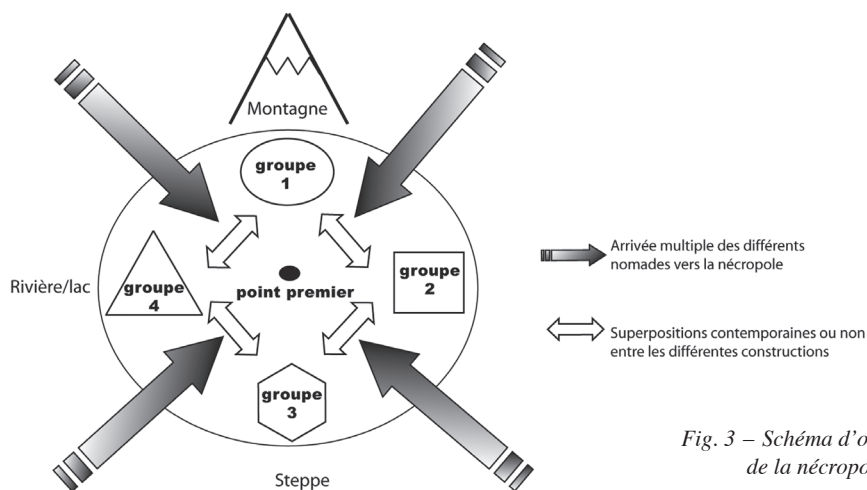
4. À toutes les époques, les tombes de ces populations Andronovo et Saka ont été pillées. Les premiers pillages ne sont pas postérieurs de beaucoup aux inhumations elles-mêmes et concernent souvent les constructions les plus importantes en taille.

5. Ce phénomène, qui reste rare à la fin du Bronze (Bendezu-Sarmiento *et al.* 2008), est plus répandu chez les adultes, au moins dans les textes, à l'âge du Fer. Hérodote nous dit (IV: 72) qu'un an après la cérémonie d'enterrement des "rois scythes", cinquante serviteurs étaient sacrifiés et leurs cadavres placés sur des carcasses de chevaux tués, soutenus par des perches, afin qu'ils montent la garde autour de la sépulture royale.

lorsque les sujets périnataux sont inhumés, ils ne possèdent presque jamais leurs propres structures d'enceinte. Ils se trouvent, le plus souvent, seuls autour de la sépulture principale, ou ils accompagnent des adultes en compagnie d'autres immatures plus âgés. Les enfants autour de 3 ans semblent avoir joui d'une certaine reconnaissance sociale, car c'est à partir de cet âge qu'ils possèdent leur propre structure d'enceinte, toutefois située le plus souvent en périphérie de la construction principale. Ce phénomène prend sa réelle dimension chez les enfants de plus de 8 ans. Cela indique, pour l'âge du Bronze, les classes d'âge à partir desquelles on bénéficie d'une tombe individualisée, signe de reconnaissance sociale (Bendezu-Sarmiento, Sellier 2006). Les sujets périnataux (morts autour de l'accouchement) sont présents, quoique faiblement, à l'âge du Bronze. En revanche, les enfants de l'âge du Fer restent fortement sous-représentés et cela ne semble pas être uniquement lié à un problème d'échantillonnage mais bien à un réel manque de tombes de cette catégorie d'âge. Le recrutement des individus, à l'âge du Fer, donnait donc priorité aux sujets adultes dans ces kourganes construits pour abriter une seule fosse et généralement un seul inhumé. Ainsi, les fosses secondaires qui pouvaient contenir des enfants ne sont pas nombreuses et se retrouvent surtout à l'âge du Fer ancien. Certains auteurs, comme N. Bokovienko en se fondant sur ses fouilles dans l'Altaï, pensent que les sépultures d'enfants prenaient place dans l'espace séparant les kourganes les uns des autres (communication personnelle). Il est également probable que les sépultures d'immatures aient pris place autour des campements nomades installés tout au long de l'année à des endroits fixés encore inconnus.

LA PLACE DE L'ESPACE SÉPULCRAI.

D'une manière générale, les nécropoles de l'âge du Bronze se trouvaient non loin des sites d'habitat, permettant ainsi aux différentes communautés qui les utilisaient d'y accéder. Les nécropoles où l'on constate une continuité chronologique entre le Bronze final et le début du Fer sont exceptionnelles et très peu de nécropoles sont connues pour l'âge du Fer ancien (Bendezu-Sarmiento *et al.* 2006). Quand elles existent, ces nécropoles, sans site d'habitat associé, comportent un nombre de structures réduit à une dizaine de kourganes. Par contre, des structures isolées anciennes sont signalées en quantité non négligeable dans la steppe (Bokovienko et Zadneprovski 1992). Selon les chercheurs soviétiques, ces différents aspects reflètent au début du Fer, dans une évolution vers une économie nomade d'élevage, l'apparition d'une communauté composée de petites familles individuelles de type "tribus" différenciées⁶ mais unies par la parenté et l'occupation du territoire (Margulan *et al.* 1966). Cela devrait être en partie perceptible dans l'occupation de la nécropole (*fig. 3*).



*Fig. 3 – Schéma d'occupation
de la nécropole.*

6. Contrairement à la société du Bronze où les groupes de familles “nucléaires” (cinq à dix personnes chacune) pouvaient atteindre plusieurs dizaines de personnes habitant une structure d’habitat de forme rectangulaire (Evdokimov 1998).

À l'intérieur de la nécropole, la taille et la complexité de la construction de certaines tombes peuvent-elles marquer une dimension symbolique par laquelle l'inhumé et/ou son clan cherchent à échapper à l'oubli ? Ce phénomène est tout particulièrement accentué chez les membres de l'aristocratie de l'âge du Fer où l'aspect extérieur du kourgane, par son importance, reflète les strates hiérarchiques de la société. Cette architecture monumentale intimement liée au rang du défunt va attirer l'attention des survivants en leur rappelant sa haute position sociale et économique, à travers l'importance de l'investissement collectif (en matériaux et en effort de travail pour sa construction). Ce processus devient plus évident vers l'âge du Fer récent et final (deuxième moitié du I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C.), périodes durant lesquelles apparaissent de très grandes structures. Des tertres funéraires atteignent jusqu'à 100 m de diamètre et presque 20 m de hauteur (fig. 4), construits dans des zones réservées à une élite royale (nécropole de Besshatyr, de Berel', de Chilikty et d'Issyk dans la partie orientale du Kazakhstan). C'est ainsi qu'à l'âge du Fer, à défaut de trouver des sites d'habitat, nous découvrons chez ces nomades une "sédentarité autour de la mort" dans laquelle l'espace funéraire, les zones de pâturages et l'eau se conjuguent pour exalter la vie au sein d'un circuit de déplacement d'échelle réduite et grande (cf. *infra*). En l'absence d'un lieu de culte spécialisé, les nécropoles devaient jouer un rôle de catalyseur plutôt qu'être un simple lieu d'inhumation. Les grands kourganes ainsi que le rituel funéraire élaboré dont ils étaient le théâtre constituaient le moyen d'expression privilégié des conceptions religieuses et cosmologiques à grande échelle dans les steppes, comme semble le croire K.A. Akishev qui voit dans les nécropoles des élites, avec leur organisation en cercles ou alignements, une représentation de la conception ancienne de l'espace (appropriation du territoire), du temps (calendrier) et du système social (hiérarchie) qui donne à voir "[The] universe as an accurate system and reproduces the concept of common systematic cosmic order" (Akishev 2002, p. 351). La fouille récente du kourgane de Beiram, à l'ouest de la Mongolie, semble bien confirmer ces acceptions : une grande structure de 22 m de diamètre, datée du Fer récent (450-400 av. J.-C.), ne contenait pas de corps inhumés mais plus de quatre cents objets archéologiques. Il s'agit d'une sorte de cénotaphe, que J. Davis-Kimball (2000) décrit comme un kourgane, construit à des fins purement votives ou religieuses. D'autres grands ensembles de tombes de l'âge du Fer ancien, découverts notamment depuis 1998 à Arzhan 2 (Touva)⁷ avec la sépulture d'un couple princier et de quatorze chevaux, mettent en évidence la fonction du kourgane, non seulement comme ensemble funéraire, mais aussi comme lieu de culte (Chugunov *et al.* 2006).⁸ Mais cette perspective d'espace sacré était-elle la même pour les nécropoles à kourganes modestes de l'âge du Fer ? Et si tel était le cas, cette notion peut-elle s'étendre à l'ensemble des nécropoles de l'âge du Bronze ? Cela semble très probable, du moins à moyenne échelle, comme le montre l'activité qui se déroule autour des tombes, marquée par différents rites d'offrande, probablement liés à des repas funéraires au cours des funérailles et plus tard au cours de "commémorations" et autres dépôts d'offrandes. À ces premières remarques, il faut associer les tamgas, signes géométriques interprétés comme les emblèmes et/ou les modes de représentation d'identités tribales, clans ou famille. Ce système de signes, associé à des sociétés pastorales qui ne pratiquaient pas l'écriture, est présent sous de nombreuses formes et par centaines d'exemplaires sur le vaste territoire centrasiatique au nord de la Mer Noire et du Caucase. Il apparaît sur divers supports : chaudrons, vaisselle en céramique, éléments de parure tels que les boucles de ceinture, harnachements, miroirs, armes. Ce système, qui remonte au moins à l'âge du Bronze, reste très vivace durant l'âge du Fer et peut également se retrouver sous forme de signes gravés sur les stèles funéraires et dans les tombes. Aujourd'hui encore, chez les peuples d'Asie centrale, notamment au Kazakhstan et

7. Déjà dans les années 1970, M.P. Grjaznov avait fouillé le très riche kourgane d'Arzhan 1 de plus de 100 m de diamètre, site qu'il considérait comme un haut lieu de culte ancien (VIII^e-IX^e s. av. J.-C.).

8. Il s'agissait donc de créer un espace sacré comme l'illustre encore Hérodote à propos des kourganes royaux. En effet, la nécropole semblait servir de repère et de "lieu saint", comme l'explique le roi Idanthysos à Darius "... *jamais encore je n'ai eu peur d'un homme et fui devant lui, et je ne fus pas d'avantage aujourd'hui. Je ne fais rien maintenant que je n'aie toujours eu l'habitude de faire, même en temps de paix. Si je ne te livre pas bataille immédiatement, je vais encore te donner la raison : nous n'avons ni villes ni cultures qui nous obligeraient, de peur de les voir prises ou saccagées par l'ennemi, à livrer bataille en hâte. S'il faut absolument en venir vite là, nous avons des tombes où reposent nos ancêtres : allons, trouvez-les, et essayez d'y toucher ! Vous verrez bien alors si nous combattons pour elles ou si nous refuserons encore de nous battre.*" (Hérodote, IV, 127).

en Mongolie, le fer à marquer les chevaux porte le nom de tamaga (Waddington 1974). Même si, avec le temps, ces signes ont acquis une valeur de symbole, il semblerait que dans les contextes funéraires anciens ils auraient pu remplir des fonctions protectrices et/ou magiques. Si cette dernière remarque reste difficile à prouver, il est sans doute permis de croire qu'à l'origine, les tamgas jouaient un rôle de "marquage" dans l'appropriation symbolique ou réelle d'un objet et/ou d'un territoire, d'autant plus que ce même type de signe ancien se retrouve sur des rochers, associé à des pétroglyphes protohistoriques. Ces complexes rupestres, qui se situent à des endroits géographiquement spécifiques dans la montagne (un col entre deux vallées, près des sources d'eau, près des nécropoles...), servaient surtout de repères pour le passage des tribus nomades et de leurs troupeaux. Certains de ces sites ont été déifiés dès la Protohistoire (et encore de nos jours), faisant office de "lieu sacré", de territoire collectif avec des rituels communs (Sarmishsaj, Sajmaly Tash, Tamgaly...), comme nos nécropoles à travers leurs symboliques spatiales et leur constitution particulière.



Fig. 4a-b – Nécropole à kourganes au Tianshan : nécropole d'Issyk (en haut), nécropole de Besshatyr (en bas).

LA PLACE DES RESSOURCES EN EAU DANS L'EMPLACEMENT DE LA NÉCROPOLE

Tant à l'âge du Bronze qu'à l'âge du Fer ancien, il existait dans ces nécropoles des fosses à offrandes liées à des commémorations rituelles, pas nécessairement dédiées aux morts mais aux "divinités", parmi lesquelles se comptait sans doute l'eau. En effet, à un niveau géographique plus vaste, des indices portent à croire que les cours d'eau, en tant que ressource naturelle, jouissaient d'une grande importance dans la pratique culturelle des peuples sédentaires et agraires de l'âge du Bronze, comme dans celles des pasteurs nomades du Fer. Il existait une volonté systématique de placer leurs nécropoles au bord de terrasses insubmersibles à proximité des cours d'eaux ou des lacs, doublée d'une volonté d'orienter les sépultures, au sein des cimetières, vers l'aval ou l'amont des courants comme pour "guider" l'âme du défunt. C'est ainsi que dans l'espace naturel, la rivière servant d'orientation n'était pas considérée comme un axe partant de la source pour finir à l'embouchure, mais plutôt comme une sorte de boucle de vie, car ce qui s'achève à l'aval va renaître à l'amont... Cette conception de la mort, qui reste difficile à démontrer pour les périodes anciennes, subsiste encore chez certaines populations de Sibérie. C'est le cas des Evenks actuels, peuple sibérien éleveurs de rennes, chez lesquels l'espace (identitaire et sacré) n'est défini ni par les points cardinaux, ni par les montagnes, mais par les rivières. Ce repère, entre autres, leur sert à se différencier au sein des groupes de parenté, en fonction des rivières principales le long desquelles ils nomadisent. Cette vision de l'espace marque un schéma de parenté et un schéma hydrographique qui vont de pair, indissociables l'un de l'autre (Lavrillier 2006), ce qui implique que l'axe constitué par l'amont et l'aval de la rivière est un repère très important. Ainsi ces groupes orientent les tombes de leurs défunts, non pas par rapport au levant ou au couchant du soleil, mais dans la direction supposée de la source de la rivière, réelle ou même "imaginaire".⁹ C'est bien la rivière réelle ou imaginaire, visible ou invisible, qui est au cœur de l'orientation tant réelle que symbolique. De cette façon, la rivière permet de s'orienter dans l'espace et de gérer cet espace dans le temps, de mémoriser la parenté de son groupe social, d'imaginer le monde des esprits et de penser le cycle de la vie.¹⁰

LA NÉCROPOLE COMME "LIEU SACRÉ" DANS L'OCCUPATION DU TERRITOIRE

Quand on parle de nomade, on associe souvent de manière abusive mouvement et liberté géographique pour présenter un pasteur errant sur un territoire indifférencié à la recherche de pâtures pour son bétail. C'est tout le contraire en Asie centrale car l'histoire et les études ethnologiques dévoilent que chez les pasteurs nomades la délimitation des zones de pacage entre clans se base sur des repères naturels ou artificiels qui servent de bornes dans l'espace, comme la position des astres, l'emplacement des collines, des lacs, des rivières, des nécropoles et des kourganés.¹¹ Chez les populations kazakhs actuelles (turco-mongoles), les toponymes, souvent composés des mots *darija* "fleuve", *su* "eau", *köl* "lac", *teniz* "mer", *qum* "sable", "désert", *tau* "montagne", *saj* "ravin", *mola* "ombre", témoignent de la nature de ce type de repères (Ferret 2006). Ces repères servaient à mémoriser l'emplacement des zones les plus riches en fourrage et en eau, notamment pour les populations nomades. Pour cette raison, il est probable qu'une distinction sociale reposant sur la "propriété privée" s'était déjà installée à petite, moyenne et grande échelle, mais nous ne savons pas comment elle s'organisait dans un espace limité et administré.¹² Il reste aujourd'hui difficile de délimiter un

9. Cours d'eau invisible (ou caché), qui serait lié au chamanisme. Cette rivière se retrouve dans le monde des vivants ("terre du milieu") et sépare, dans leurs répartition cosmologique, le "monde d'en haut" du "monde d'en bas".

10. Sans doute est-ce la raison pour laquelle, dans la langue évenke, les mots "rivière", "route" et "vie" sont des synonymes (Lavrillier 2006).

11. En outre, ils servent à évaluer des distances, à s'orienter dans l'espace et à pointer des positions par rapport à des directions prépondérantes.

12. L'existence de ces découpages territoriaux est admise notamment chez les Scythes royaux où Hérodote signale à deux reprises (IV, 62, 66) que le territoire scythe était divisé en "nomes", sous le commandement d'un "monarque".

cadre territorial chez les nomades du passé, même si nous savons que ces populations devaient se déplacer d'un pâturage à l'autre en suivant un itinéraire déterminé, comme le montre l'histoire.¹³ En effet, la dispersion des troupeaux nomades dans l'espace ne devait pas nécessairement correspondre à une extension de la propriété privée. L'histoire, encore une fois, montre que chez les nomades centrasiatiques du XIX^e s., l'usage et les accords mutuels entre les clans délimitaient les zones de pacage. Les pâturages n'avaient pas tous le même statut, et les estivages étaient la propriété collective de tous, tandis que les pâtures d'inter-saison étaient utilisées par un clan déterminé et celles d'hivernage étaient toujours utilisées par la même "unité de nomadisation", et constituaient donc, avec le pré à foin, les puits et les forêts qui s'y trouvaient, la possession privée des familles (Ferret sous presse). Cette répartition, qui pouvait donner lieu à des litiges entre les clans, se basait essentiellement sur les mêmes repères naturels ou artificiels que ceux utilisés pour l'orientation dans l'espace : lacs, collines, rivières ou encore une fois les nécropoles à kourganes. Ainsi, ces dernières pouvaient même être déplacées volontairement afin de marquer le droit sur des terres.¹⁴

Durant les périodes anciennes, nous croyons que ce même type de répartition nomade du territoire (pacages) existait déjà et que le circuit de déplacement est reflété jusqu'à un certain point par l'organisation de l'espace sépulcral ancien. En effet, une même nécropole contenait divers groupes de nomades appartenant à des clans familiaux différenciés, identifiés en particulier par des groupements ou des alignements de tertres funéraires ainsi que par la position et l'orientation du corps et de la tête des inhumations (fig. 5).

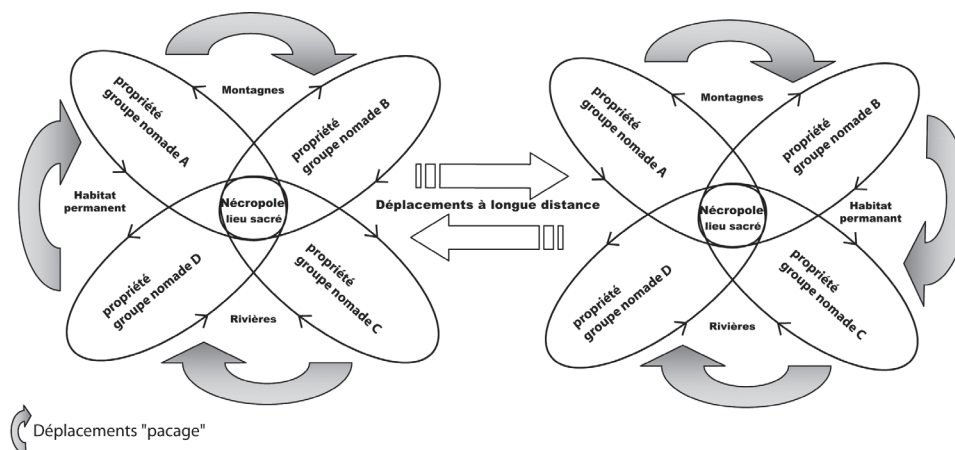


Fig. 5 – Schéma d'occupation du territoire par saison.

Il est évident qu'à l'âge du Fer, durant lequel, pour les chercheurs contemporains, la notion de territoire reste floue, cette cohésion culturelle entre les différents groupes devait s'afficher ostensiblement, à l'endroit où elle était la plus menacée pour différentes raisons, parmi lesquelles les conflits (cf. note 14). Par conséquent, la situation privilégiée ou la richesse d'une tombe n'était pas simplement le reflet de la place sociale du défunt, mais bien plus le miroir des intentions et des volontés des survivants afin de mettre en valeur leur propre image et leur propre place au sein d'un territoire plus vaste. C'est la présence du "chef" comme centre du pouvoir : son foyer (sa tombe) est le lieu par lequel transitent les échanges, servant de point de référence aux relations sociales. Vivant, il est le centre mobile du pouvoir ; mort, il devient le

13. Chez les Mongols du milieu du XIII^e s., Guillaume de Rubrouk écrit que : "Chaque capitaine, selon qu'il a plus ou moins d'hommes sous ses ordres, connaît les limites de ces pâturages, il sait où il doit faire paître en hiver et en été, au printemps et en automne. En hiver ils descendent vers des régions plus chaudes, au sud ; en été ils remontent vers des régions plus fraîches, au nord. En hiver, quand il y a de la neige, ils ont des pâturages sans eau, parce que la neige leur en tient lieu" (traduit par C.-C. et R. Kappler d'après Rockhill 1900).

14. Comme le racontent des membres du clan Nurbaj (tribu Alim de la petite Horde), qui indiquent comment Nurbaj bi, leur ancêtre fondateur, n'avait pas hésité à déplacer les restes d'anciennes tombes sur des meilleures pâtures. Communication personnelle de S. Aouelbekov, citée dans Ferret 2006.

“centre excentré” du territoire (repère). La tombe royale tient bien lieu de “centre” : elle est, en effet, ce point fixe et immobile qui fait que l’espace nomade peut se constituer comme territoire par référence à un pouvoir. Ce centre était interdit, tabou car sacré, mais loin de l’idée d’un centre vide (*vacuum*) car il était le lieu où les routes se croisaient (centre “plein”).

En d’autres termes, il s’agit donc de donner une place dans l’espace ou une forme de présence dans le vécu des vivants car les ancêtres morts ainsi rassemblés participent encore à la reproduction du groupe. C’est toujours le cas aujourd’hui parmi des populations nomades Dörvöd en Mongolie où les variations de “l’emplacement” ou “présence” donnée au mort sont révélatrices des fluctuations de la société, qui sont peu perceptibles autrement dans la vie quotidienne ou dans les pratiques mortuaire (Delaplace 2008).

La notion même de territoire implique donc des imbrications mortuaires conceptuelles dans la perception de l’espace géographique, son extension (à petite, moyenne et grande échelle), son type d’appropriation (privée ou collective) ainsi que sa durée d’utilisation (saisons). Bien que dans le cas des nomades anciens ces différents concepts ne soient pas toujours des valeurs absolues à travers le temps, ils pourraient à l’avenir être appréhendés scientifiquement (par des questions précises), notamment par des études plus poussées en archéologie funéraire et en anthropologie biologique. Les travaux de fouilles devront être programmés sur plusieurs nécropoles entières d’une même région et d’une même phase chronologique. Les résultats de ces recherches, inscrits dans une étude pluridisciplinaire devenue nécessaire, combinant géographie, histoire, ethnologie, génétique, sociologie, etc., devraient se révéler à la hauteur de nos espérances dans la mesure où seule cette vision pluridisciplinaire permet d’appréhender ce domaine sous un nouvel éclairage. Il s’agit d’une procédure complexe que nous tentons de développer actuellement en Asie centrale.

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BESTATTUNGEN UNTER HÜGELN IM GEBIET DER MITTLEREN DONAU SEIT DEM ENDE DES ÄNEOLITHIKUMS BIS ZUM BEGINN DER MITTLEREN BRONZEZEIT

BURIAL MOUNDS ON THE MIDDLE DANUBE FROM THE END OF THE CHALCOLITHIC
TO THE BEGINNING OF THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE

Jozef BÁTORA *

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Beitrag ist der Problematik der Bestattungen unter Hügeln im Gebiet der mittleren Donau seit dem Ende des Äneolithikums bis zum Beginn der mittleren Bronzezeit gewidmet. Die spätäneolithischen Gräber unter Hügeln wurden nicht in die Erde eingetieft, sondern die Toten wurden auf dem Niveau der ursprünglichen Erdoberfläche bestattet. Ein ähnliche Sitte kann man zum großen Teil auch bei den Gräbern unter Hügeln in der Frühbronzezeit feststellen. Offensichtlich dauerte hier in der Bestattungsweise eine längere Tradition an. Am Ende der älteren und am Anfang der mittleren Bronzezeit änderte sich die Bestattungsweise und die Verstorbenen wurden in eingetieften Grabgruben bestattet. Zu den ältesten Hügelkonstruktionen gehören diejenigen, in welchen das Zentralgrab mit Kreisgräben umgeben ist. Wie die neuesten Ergebnisse von Ausgrabungen aus der Südwest-Slowakei (or better Südwest-Slowakei) (Jelšovce), Südmähren (Borovice) und Niederösterreich (Franzhausen II) gezeigt haben, hat der Brauch, in den Kulturen der mittleren Bronzezeit im mittleren Donaauraum, d. h. in der Karpatischen- und Mitteldanubischen Hügelgräberkultur und offensichtlich auch in der Vorlausitzer Kultur, die Gräber mit Hügeln zu versehen, seinen Ursprung in den Kulturen des jüngeren Abschnittes der älteren Bronzezeit, d. h. in der Maďarovce-, Věteřov-Kultur und in der Böhmeimkirchner Gruppe der Věteřov-Kultur. Diese Bestattungsweise entwickelte sich von der älteren Bronzezeit kontinuierlich in die mittlere Bronzezeit, als ein natürlicher Bestandteil der genetischen Entwicklung der einzelnen Hügelgräberkulturen.

ABSTRACT

This contribution is devoted to a study of burial mounds in the middle Danube region, dating from the end of the Chalcolithic to the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age. The burial mounds of the Late Chalcolithic were not dug into the soil but rather the dead were deposited at the level of the original surface. The Early Bronze Age burial mounds followed a similar custom. This was clearly a long-standing burial tradition. At the end of the Early Bronze Age and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age, this manner of burial changed, and the dead were buried in deep pit graves. Those central graves that are surrounded by a circle belong to the oldest tumulus constructions. As the latest results of excavations in southwest Slovakia (Jelšovce), southern Moravia (Borovice) and lower Austria (Franzhausen II) have shown, the

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practice of constructing tumuli over graves in the cultures of the middle Danube during the Middle Bronze Age, that is, in the tumulus culture of the Carpathians and the middle Danube as well as in the Vorlausitz culture, originates in the cultures of the last phase of the Early Bronze Age, that is, in the Mad'arovce and Věteřov cultures, as well as in the Böhmeikirch group of the Věteřov culture. This burial practice continued to develop from the Early Bronze Age to the Middle Bronze Age, as a natural feature in the evolution of the different tumulus cultures.

Das Phänomen der Bestattungen unter Hügeln kommt bereits im Gebiet der mittleren Donau in der Zeit des älteren Äneolithikums in der Trichterbecherkultur (ihre Baalberger Gruppe) in Mähren vor, in dem solche Bestattungen vor allem aus dem Gebiet von Olomouc und Prostějov bekannt sind. Hügelgräberfelder durchliefen hier eine lange autochthone Entwicklung von der Baalberger Phase der Trichterbecherkultur bis zur II. Stufe der Badener Kultur. Diese Entwicklung wirkte sich auch auf die Entwicklung der Hügelbestattung aus, die von M. Šmíd in drei Gruppen I-III eingeteilt wurde (1991, S. 76).

DIE ENDÄNEOLITHISCHE HÜGEL

Die Bestattungen unter Hügeln kommen auch in der Gruppe Mödling-Zöbing vor, welche die entwickelte Phase der Jevišovice-Kultur in Österreich darstellt. Auf der Fundstelle Gars am Tunau wurden zwei Brandgräber untersucht, die mit zwei großen Bruchsteinen überdeckt waren. Die Gräber waren nicht weit voneinander entfernt und waren wahrscheinlich mit einer Hügelaufschüttung überdeckt (Leneis *et al.* 1995, S. 187-188). Die Bestattung von beiden Gräbern unter einem Hügel kann mit Hügelbestattungen in Mittelmähren verbunden werden. Es könnte sich um den III. Typ von Hügeln handeln und zwar um Hügel des Ohrozimer Typs im Sinne der Typologie von M. Šmíd (1991).

In der Zeit des Jung- und Spätäneolithikums kommen die Bestattungen unter Hügeln in diesem Raum vor allem in der Schnurkeramik- und Glockenbecherkultur vor. In dem Beitrag richte ich meine Aufmerksamkeit auf die Belege für Bestattungen unter Hügeln in den Kulturen des spätäneolithischen vučedoler bzw. postvučedoler Kulturkomplexes und in den Kulturen, die die Anfangsphase der Bronzezeit im Gebiet der mittleren Donau repräsentieren.

Aus dem angeführten Zeitabschnitt wurden mehrere Belege für Bestattungen unter Hügeln in österreichischem Burgenland (Neusiedler am See), in Nordwest-Ungarn (Rajka, Gönyü und Kajárpec) und in der Südwest-Slowakei (Krásno, Šurany) festgestellt (*Abb. 1*).

Burgenland

Im Jahr 1943 wurde bei den Ausschachtungsarbeiten im Kataster der Gemeinde Neusiedler am See, in der Lage Kalvarienberg ein Hügel angeschnitten (*Abb. 1: 5*). Der Hügel hatte einen Durchmesser von 18 m und eine Höhe von *ca.* 2 m. Die Beobachtungen zeigten, dass sich in der Mitte des Hügels, auf dem Niveau der ursprünglichen Erdoberfläche, in einer Tiefe von 80-190 cm, ein am Rücken liegendes und ziemlich gut erhaltenes Skelett in anatomischer Anordnung befand (Grab 1 – primäres Grab). 40 cm über dem Skelett im Grab 1 befand sich das weitere, schon in der Urzeit gestörte Skelett eines Kindes (Grab 2) (Ruttkay 2002, S. 146-147).

Die Funde wurden von R. Pittioni in die Zeit vor der Badener Kultur datiert und als Neusiedler-Typus zusammen mit dem Retz-Typus bezeichnet (Pittioni 1947, S. 225-234). I. Bóna datierte in der Mitte der 1960er Jahren den Hügel in Neusiedler am See in einen wesentlich jüngeren Zeitabschnitt, und zwar in die Zeit der Somogyvár-Kultur (1965, S. 47). Neulich kam E. Ruttkay zum Schluss, dass die Funde aus dem zentralen Grab 1 in die Zeit der entwickelten Vučedol-Kultur datiert werden können, die nach I. Burger in der modernen österreichischen Forschung als Vučedol II/Ig I bezeichnet wird (Ruttkay 2003, S. 447).

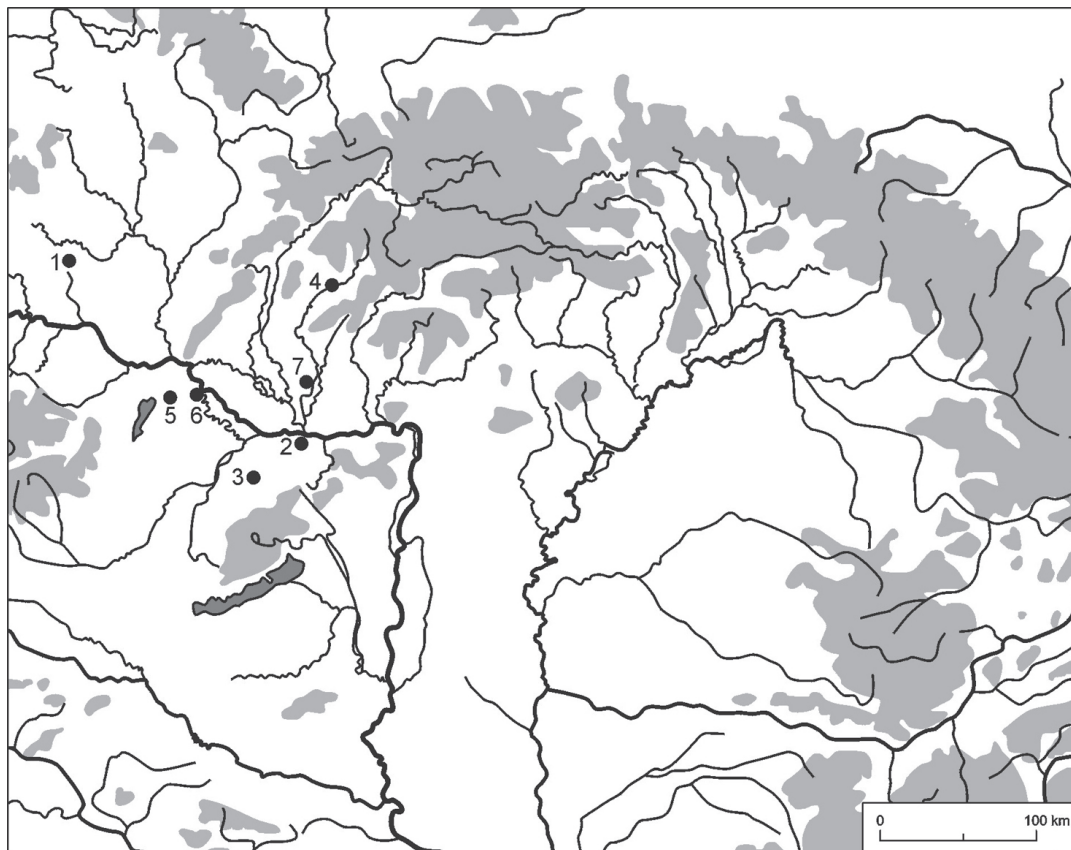


Abb. 1 – Karte des mittleren Donaugebiets mit Fundstellen der Bestattungen unter Hügeln in der Zeit des Jung- und Spätäneolithikums. 1: Gars am Tunau; 2: Kajárpec; 3: Gönyü; 4: Krásno; 5: Neusiedler am See; 6: Rajka; 7: Šurany.

Den Keramikkomplex aus dem zentralen Grab und ihre eindeutigen Analogien in Gönyü und in Györszabadhegy repräsentieren Facies Neusiedler im nördlichen und mittleren Burgenland und im Zwischenstromland der Raab. Facies Neusiedler bildet zusammen mit Vučedol II/Ig-Ješovice/Mödling-Zöbing einen überregionalen Horizont, der sich vom südwestlichen Mähren über das östliche Vorgebirge der österreichischen Alpen bis zum Transdanubien und Zwischenstromland der Drau und Save erstreckt.

Die eigentliche Konstruktion des Hügels und ein Haarschmuck des Toten stellen fremde Elemente dar. Parallelen zum Bau des Hügels sind im Raum der Vučedoler Kultur im Gebiet von Syrmien bekannt (z.B. Hügel in Batajnica und Vojka) (Bóna 1965, S. 17-63). Der Haarschmuck vertreten durch zwei massive spiralförmig gerollte Schläfenringe war höchstwahrscheinlich von Steppennomaden übernommen (Grubengrabkultur), bei denen dieser Schmucktyp in mehreren Fällen vorkommt. Dies lässt sich sehr gut durch das Inventar aus dem Grab 2 unter dem Hügel 1 in Podlissja in der Ukraine belegen (Bátora 2006, Abb. 7). Ebenso sind auch in geographisch nah gelegenen Gebieten Belege hierfür zu finden, wie z.B. in Ostungarn - Inventar der Gräber 4 und 7 unter dem Hügel in Sárrétudvar-Örhalom (Dani-Nepper 2006, Abb. 4: 2, 3; 5: 3, 4). Einige Belege findet man auch in Gräbern in der Vojvodina, in südlichem Banat, wie z.B. Uljma und Vatina und Voljovica bei Pančevo gleich an der Donau. Es handelt sich um ein Gebiet, in dem sich die westlichste Provinz der Grubengrabkultur auf dem Balkan befand (Nikolova 1999, S. 385-386).

Nordwest-Ungarn

In Nordwest-Ungarn ist von den Hügeln der Somogyvár-Vinkovci-Kultur der Hügel in Rajka - Modrovich puszta am bekanntesten (Abb. 1: 6). Der Hügel hatte einen Durchmesser von 66 m und eine Höhe von 2,6 m. Aus dem Schnitt, der in der Mitte des Hügels angelegt wurde, gewann man zwei doppelkonische Krüge mit

Henkel und mit zylindrischem Hals, Fragmente einer Amphora, einen Schleifstein und Tierknochen. Es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, dass es sich um ein Brandgrab handelte (Figler 1994, S. 22-23).

Ein weiteres Beispiel eines Grabes unter einem Hügel in Nordwest-Ungarn repräsentiert das Grab in Gönyü bei Győr (*Abb. 1: 3*). In der Aufschüttung eines kleinen Hügels, in der Lage "Tetüdomb", entdeckte S. Mithay in 1948, in einer Tiefe von 40-50 cm, eine zweihenkelige Amphora mit einer nach unten gerichteten Mündung und einen neben der Amphora stehenden Krug. Unter beiden Gefäßen befand sich ein Skelettgrab (Bóna 1965, S. 40).

Mit höchster Wahrscheinlichkeit kann nach A. Figler zu den Gräbern, die mit einem kleinen Hügel überdeckt sind, auch das Brandgrab 1 zugeordnet werden, das im Jahr 1986 in der Lage "Pokoldomb" in Kajárpéc untersucht wurde (*Abb. 1: 2*) (Figler 1994, S. 22).

Parallelen zu den Grabfunden aus Rajka und Kajárpéc sind auch auf den Fundstellen der Somogyvár-Vinkovci-Kultur zu finden. Auf beiden Fundstellen finden wir aber nicht die gleichen Gefäßtypen, obwohl die Analogien darauf hindeuten, dass die hier vorkommenden Formen im breiteren geographischen Raum verbreitet waren. Sie sind auch aus der Kultur Kosihi-Čaka-Makó bekannt. Zum Beispiel findet man Parallelen zum Gefäß, das im ersten Grab in Kajárpéc entdeckt wurde, im Material aus den Siedlungen z.B. in Mužla in der Südslowakei (Vladár 1966, S. 257, *Abb. 18: 10*) und Katonapart in südlichem Transdanubien (Kürti 1974, S. 31, *Abb. 2: 1*). Es erscheint auch in den frühen Phasen der Somogyvár-Vinkovci-Kultur z.B. in der Siedlung Vinkovci-Tržnica (Dimitrijevič 1982, *Tab. 8: 4*).

Südwest-Slowakei

Šurany

In den Jahren 1975 und 1976 wurde unter Leitung von J. Paulík ein Hügel untersucht, der sich in der Lage "Zakřížske" in Šurany oben auf einer Sanddüne befindet (*Abb. 1: 7*). Der Hügel hat einen leicht ovalen Grundriss mit einem maximalen Durchmesser von 28 m. Seine ursprüngliche Höhe war *ca.* 5 m.

Außer dem zentralen Grab wurden unter dem Hügel auch drei Skelettgräber von Kindern entdeckt. Zwei von ihnen (1/75, 3/76) befanden sich an den Rändern des sog. inneren zentralen Hügels und das dritte Grab (2/76) befand sich unter dem dritten Mantel des Hügels. Es handelte sich um Kinder im Alter von 2-5 Monaten (Grab 1/76; 2/76) und im Alter von 3-4 Jahren (Grab 3/76). Die anthropologische Analyse zeigte, dass sich im zentralen Grab einige unvollständig verbrannte Knochen von zwei erwachsenen Individuen befanden. Im Grab wurden Scherben von mindestens sechs Gefäßen unterschiedlicher Form und Größe gefunden. Die Keramik weist Merkmale der Keramik des donauländisch-balkanischen Komplexes der Frühbronzezeit auf und die Autoren weisen auf Zusammenhang und Ähnlichkeit mit der Gruppe Somogyvár-Vinkovci hin (Novotná, Paulík 1989, S. 368-373).

Krásno

Im Jahr 1956 entdeckte O. Krupica beim Bau von Familienhäusern im Gemeindegebiet von Krásno, im Teil "Kračiny", zwei Gräber mit Steinkonstruktion, die *ca.* 50 m voneinander entfernt waren (*Abb. 1: 4*). Die Steinkonstruktionen bestanden aus Steinkreisen (Kränzen), deren Ausmaße leider nicht bekannt sind. Im Grab 1 wurden unter der Steinkonstruktion besenstrichverzierte Scherben und Bruchstücke von Fußschalen mit geritzter weißinkrustierter Verzierung gefunden, die die Datierung in die Zeit der Kultur Kosihi-Čaka-Makó ermöglichen (Vladár 1966, S. 267-268). Anhand der Fundsituation kann angenommen werden, dass es sich um Brandgräber unter den Hügeln handelte. Es könnte sich um kleinere Hügel handeln, die den Hügeln aus dem spätbadener Zeitabschnitt ähnlich sind, die wir z.B. aus Včelince oder Gemer im Süden der Mittelslowakei und aus der Fundstelle Center in Nordungarn kennen (Kovács 2002, S. 9-13).

DIE HÜGEL VOM ANFANG DER BRONZEZEIT

Burgenland

Im Jahr 1930 befanden sich in einer Hochlage des Gebirges Leitha, in Jois, in der Lage "Joiser Heide", noch 50 Hügel (Abb. 2: 3). Vier von diesen Hügeln wurden in den Jahren 1930 und 1931 von A. Seracsin untersucht (1931, S. 22-23).

Die Hügel der Wieselburger Kultur bzw. die Hügel aus der frühen Bronzezeit (IV, V, VI, 14) unterscheiden sich ganz klar durch ihren Bau von dem Hügel II, der in die Gruppe Leithaprodersdorf datiert wird. Während in diesem Hügel Gräber auf dem Niveau des damaligen Geländes lagen und mit einem Hügel überdeckt waren, der aus einer Schicht von Steinen und Ton bestand, enthielten die anderen Hügel Steinschichten, in die bestattet wurde.

Beachtenswert ist im Zusammenhang mit den Hügeln in Jois die Annahme von I. Bóna, der die Gräberfelder der Wieselburger Kultur in Gattendorf, Rusovce u.a. als "große, flache Hügelgräberfelder" bezeichnet, die dem Steppenvolk gehören mussten. Nach I. Bóna kann bei den Gräbern in Rusovce der charakteristische östliche Bestattungsritus konstatiert werden: Rückenlage mit in den Knien eingezogenen Beinen (1975, S. 237).

Im Zusammenhang mit der Entdeckung der Bestattung unter Hügeln bzw. in den Hügeln in der Kulturgruppe Leithaprodersdorf und in der nachfolgenden Wieselburger Kultur, taucht die Frage ihrer gegenseitigen Beeinflussung auf. Es geht also darum, ob die Träger der Wieselburger Kultur in einer offensichtlich modifizierten Form die Sitte, in den Hügeln zu bestatten, von den Trägern der Kulturgruppe Leithaprodersdorf übernommen haben (Hicke 1987, S. 200).

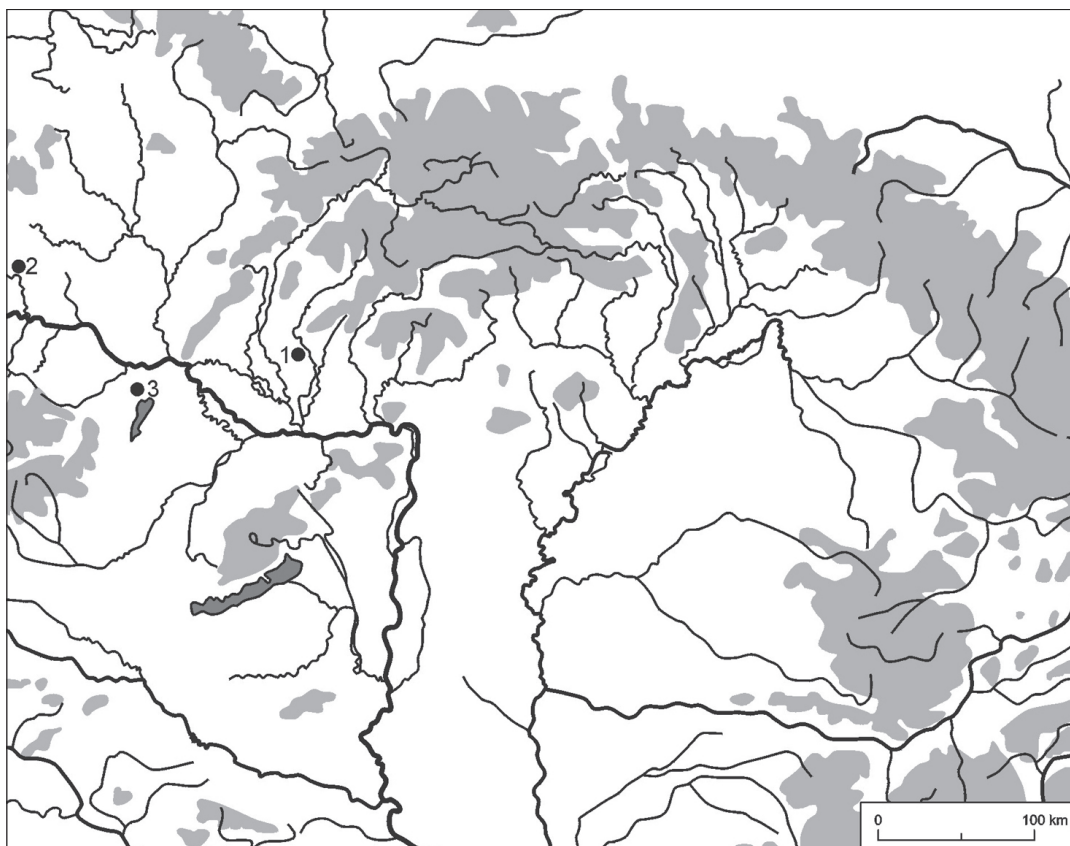


Abb. 2 – Karte des mittleren Donaugebiets mit Fundstellen der Bestattungen unter Hügeln vom Anfang der älteren Bronzezeit. 1: Branč; 2: Eggenburg; 3: Jois.

Niederösterreich

Im niederösterreichischen Eggenburg wurden drei Hügel untersucht (*Abb. 2: 2*). In zwei kleineren Hügeln mit einem Durchmesser von 3,5 und 6 m wurde nur Scherbenmaterial gefunden, es wurden keine Spuren von Bestattungen entdeckt. In dem größeren Hügel mit einem Durchmesser von 10 m und einer Höhe von 1,25 m wurden fünf Skelettgräber festgestellt (Skelette in der Hockerlage, auf der rechten Seite, Orientierung NW-SO, Blick in östlicher Richtung, Lage am Unterboden). Jedes Grab enthielt ein Gefäß und in zwei Gräbern wurden auch kleine bronzene Schmuckgegenstände entdeckt (Ladenbauer-Orel 1949, S. 58-59). Die angeführten Artefakte aus den Gräbern ermöglichten die Datierung des Hügels in die jüngere Phase der Aunjetitzer Kultur. Es handelt sich um den einzigen verlässlichen Beleg für die Bestattung unter Hügeln im Gebiet des mährisch-niederösterreichischen Zweigs der Aunjetitzer Kultur.

Südwest-Slowakei

Auf dem Gräberfeld in Branč wurde in den Jahren 1961-1962 von J. Vladár das Grab 62 untersucht, das mit einem Kreisgraben mit einem Durchmesser von 570 cm umgeben war (*Abb. 2: 1*). Um das Grab herum befand sich eine freie Fläche, die für die Existenz einer Hügelaufschüttung spricht. Im Grab befanden sich das zerstreute Skelett eines Mannes und Bruchstücke eines Blechbeschlags. Das Grab kann in die Zeit der Nitra-Kultur datiert werden (Vladár 1973, S. 127-128).

DIE HÜGELBESTATTUNGEN VOM ENDE DER FRÜHBRONZEZEIT UND VOM ANFANG DER MITTELBRONZEZEIT

Nach dem Hiatus kommen Bestattungen unter Hügeln erneut in dem letzten Abschnitt der Frühbronzezeit in den Kulturen des Kulturkomplexes Maďarovce-Věteřov-Böheimkirchen vor.

Die Hügelgrabbestattung gehört zu einem der grundlegenden Merkmale der mittelbronzezeitlichen Kulturen, die auf dem breiten Gebiet von Mittel- und Westeuropa verbreitet waren. Im Rahmen des Komplexes von Hügelgräberkulturen stößt man im Gebiet der mittleren Donau auf zwei Hügelgräberkulturen: die Karpatische Hügelgräberkultur, die im östlichen Teil der Südwest-Slowakei, in Burgenland und Transdanubien verbreitet war und auf die Mitteldanubische Hügelgräberkultur, die sich im westlichen Teil der Südwest-Slowakei, in Mähren, Niederösterreich und Mittelschwechien erstreckte. Im Zusammenhang mit der Frage der Genese von Hügelgräberkulturen im Gebiet der mittleren Donau tritt auch die Frage der Bestattungen unter Hügelschüttungen in den Vordergrund. Gerade die in den letzten 30 Jahren realisierten Ausgrabungen auf dem Gebiet der Südwest-Slowakei, in Südmähren, in Niederösterreich, in Bayern und Ungarn trugen zur Lösung dieser Frage bei.

Südwest-Slowakei

Jelšovce

Im Areal des ausgedehnten Gräberfeldes der Maďarovce-Kultur in Jelšovce wurden in vier Fällen Spuren von Kreisgräben festgestellt (*Abb. 3: 6*), welche die Grabgruben der Gräber 10, 152, 240 und 256 umgaben (Bátora 2000, Beilage 1). Die Außendurchmesser der durch die Gräben umgrenzten Kreise bewegte sich zwischen 660 cm und 850 cm, die Breite der Gräben betrug 18-30 cm und die Tiefe 8 bis 21 cm. Die Gräben waren im Querschnitt nicht ‚v‘-förmig ausgebildet, sondern ihre Sohle war gerundet (Bátora 2000, S. 477).

Svätý Peter (früher Dolný Peter)

In Svätý Peter (früher Dolný Peter) (Abb. 3: 10) befanden sich sechs Gräber mit Kreisgräben, ähnlich wie in Jelšovce, im zentralen Teil des Gräberfeldes in paarweiser Anordnung (ein größeres und ein kleineres Hügelgrab) nebeneinander (Dušek 1969, Plan 4). Sogar die Entfernung von 8 m zwischen den Gräbern unter den Hügelgräbern 21 und 25 in Svätý Peter und zwischen den ähnlichen Gräbern 240 und 256 in Jelšovce war identisch. Markanter war nur der Unterschied bei der Breite und Tiefe der Gräben. Während in Jelšovce die Breite von 18 cm bis zu 30 cm und die Tiefe von 8 cm bis zu 21 cm variierten, waren sie in Svätý Peter 30-60 cm breit und 20-35 cm tief.

Bemerkenswert ist auch die Tatsache, dass alle erwähnten Gräber aus Svätý Peter, ähnlich wie in Jelšovce, Skelettgräber waren und zu den am reichsten ausgestatteten Gräbern auf dem Gräberfeld gehörten. z.B. im Grab 7 befanden sich neun herzförmige Anhänger und vier röhrenförmige Spiralen, im Grab 20 wurde außer einer Tasse und bronzenen Ziergegenständen ein Randleistenbeil gefunden (Dušek 1969, Abb. 10: 1-7) und das Grab 21 lieferte ein Bruchstück eines Fingerrings mit spiralförmig abgeschlossenen Enden, eine Nadel mit konischem Kopf und Durchlochung im Nadelhals und einen Dolch des Typs Dolný Peter (Dušek 1969, Abb. 10: 8-11). Der Beil- und der Dolchfund verweist darauf, dass in den Gräbern mit Kreisgräben vor allem Individuen mit hoher gesellschaftlicher Stellung bestattet wurden.

Nordungarn

Den Gräbern aus Jelšovce sind auch die Gräber aus dem nächsten Gräberfeld der Hügelgräberkultur in Jánoshída-Bereg (Abb. 3: 5) in Ungarn ähnlich. Sie gehörten zu den ältesten Gräbern auf dem Gräberfeld, aber im Unterschied zum Gräberfeld in Jelšovce und in Svätý Peter befanden sich in drei von vier Gräbern mit Kreisgräben auch Brandgräber (Csányi 1980, S. 154-160). Das Skelettgrab 113 enthielt auch trotz der Plünderung ein reiches Inventar (Csányi 1980, Abb. 7), ähnlich wie die Gräber in Svätý Peter.

Nordwestslowakei

Ähnlich wie in Jánoshída-Bereg, wurden die Brandgräber inmitten der Gräber mit Kreisgräbern auch auf dem Gräberfeld der Vorlausitzer und Lausitzer Kultur in Martin I in der Nordwestslowakei (Abb. 3: 8) festgestellt (Benkovská-Pivovarová 1972, S. 290). Bemerkenswert war auch die Tatsache, dass drei von fünf Urnengräbern eine ovale Grabgrube zeigten, die eindeutig auf eine fortsetzende Existenz der rechteckigen Gruben aus der vorausgehenden Zeit hinweisen, noch als die Skelettbestattungen üblich waren (Benkovská-Pivovarová 1972, S. 271).

Die oben angeführten Beobachtungen aus den Gräberfeldern in Jelšovce, Svätý Peter und Jánoshída-Bereg ermöglichen eine berechtigte Annahme, dass bei dem in der Karpatischen Hügelgräberkultur üblichen Brauch, die Gräber mit Hügeln zu versehen, eine direkte Kontinuität aus der vorangehenden Maďarovce-Kultur bestand. Eine ähnliche Voraussetzung kann auch im Hinblick auf die Gräber der Vorlausitzer Kultur mit Kreisgräben auf dem Gräberfeld Martin I ausgesprochen werden. Dies bestätigt auch die Tatsache, dass die mit einem Graben umgebenen Gräber chronologisch zu den ältesten auf den erwähnten Gräberfeldern aus der mittleren Bronzezeit gehören und somit die Stufe BB1 und Gräber in Martin die Stufe BB2 repräsentieren.

Im Zusammenhang mit der Entdeckung der Bestattungen unter Hügelschüttungen in der Maďarovce-Kultur drängt sich die Frage nach der Entstehung dieses Bestattungsbrauches in der verwandten Věteřov- und nachfolgend in der Mitteldanubischen Hügelgräberkultur auf.

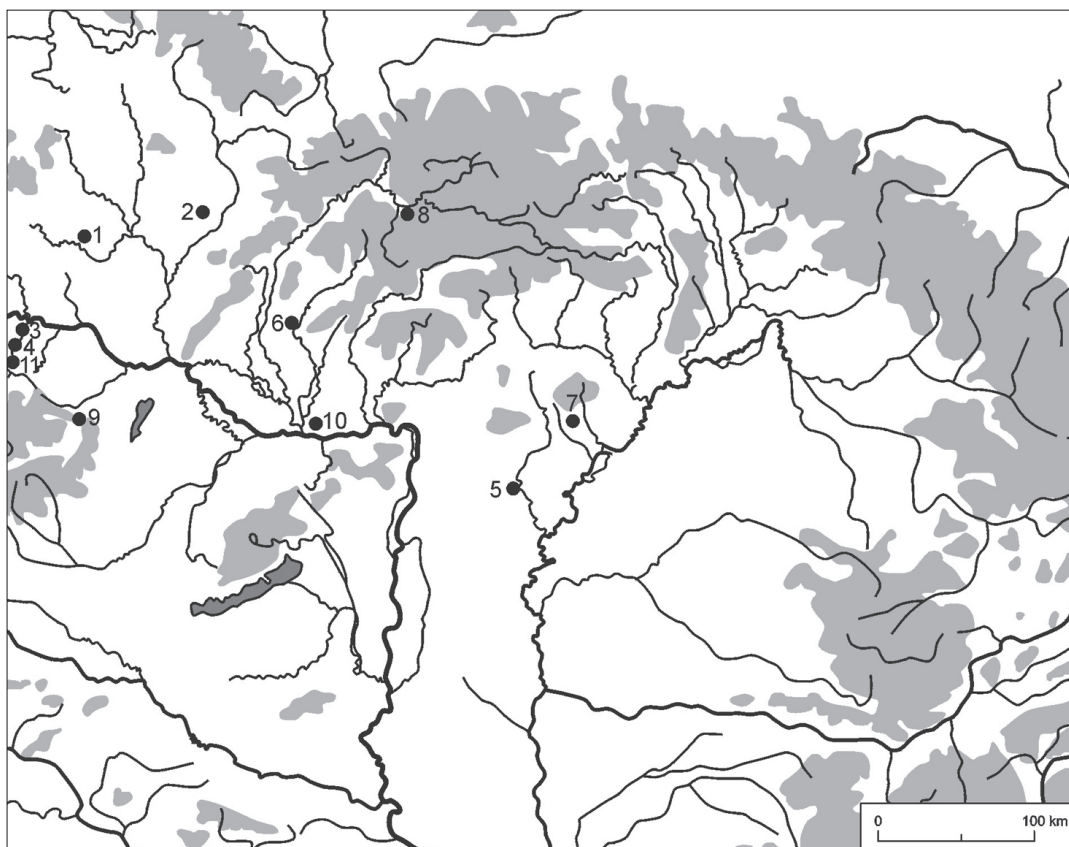


Abb. 3 – Karte des mittleren Donaugebiets mit den von Kreisgräben umgebenen Gräbern vom Ende der älteren Bronzezeit und Anfang der mittleren Bronzezeit. 1: Borotice; 2: Čeložnice; 3: Franzhausen II; 4: Herzogenburg-Kalhofen; 5: Jánosháda-Bereg; 6: Jelšovce; 7: Maklár; 8: Martin; 9: Pitten; 10: Svätý Peter (früher Dolný Peter); 11: Unterradlberg.

Südmähren

In Südmähren wurde die Bestattung unter Hügelschüttungen nur auf dem Hügelgräberfeld in Borotice (Abb. 3: 1) eindeutig nachgewiesen, wo sie in neun Fällen festgestellt wurde (Stuchlík 1990, S. 135; 2006). Das Hügelgräberfeld in Borotice ist ein gutes Beispiel für eine direkte Kontinuität der Bestattung unter Hügelschüttungen aus der Věteřov-Kultur in die Mitteldanubische Hügelgräberkultur. Im westlichen Teil des Hügelgräberfeldes befanden sich die Hügelgräber der Věteřov-Kultur und im östlichen Teil die Hügelgräber der Mitteldanubischen Hügelgräberkultur. Im zentralen Teil des Hügelgräberfeldes befanden sich in den Hügelgräbern 6 und 14 gemeinsam Gräber der beiden angeführten Kulturen (Stuchlík 1990, Abb. 169; 2006, Abb. 39 und 82).

Niederösterreich und Bayern

Überhügelte Gräber wurden auch in Niederösterreich, im Verbreitungsraum der Böheimkirchner Gruppe der Věteřov-Kultur, auf den Gräberfeldern Unterradlberg (Abb. 3: 11), Herzogenburg-Kalhofen (Abb. 3: 4) und Franzhausen II (Abb. 3: 3) festgestellt. Auf dem Gräberfeld Franzhausen II, wo mindestens 30 Gräber mit Kreisgräben untersucht wurden, ist der fließende Übergang in die Stufe Gemeinlebern III über den Horizont Bühl in die mittelbronzezeitliche Stufe BB1, d. h. in den Horizont Lochham auch durch Skelettgräber unter Hügelschüttungen belegt (Neugebauer, Gatringer 1988, S. 67).

Die Kreisgräben waren in mehreren Fällen auf den angeführten Fundstellen, ähnlich wie beim Grab 240 in Jelšovce, unterbrochen. Im Unterschied zu Jelšovce befanden sich oft an der unterbrochenen Stelle, die normalerweise an der SO-Seite war, vier oder sechs Pfostengruben (Neugebauer *et al.* 1990, S. 50). Mit einer ähnlichen Unterbrechung des Kreisgrabens an der SSO-Seite und der Platzierung der Pfostengruben werden wir auch im oberen Donauraum konfrontiert, in Bayern z. B. auf dem Gräberfeld Untermeitingen im in die Stufe BB1 (Horizont Lochham) datierten Grab 1 (Krahe 1990, Abb. 37). Ähnlich wurden auch die Gräber mit Kreisgräben auf dem Gräberfeld in Königsbrunn datiert (Schneider 1987, S. 88, Abb. 59).

SCHLUSSFOLGERUNGEN

Wie die Beobachtungen aus dem Burgenland (Neusiedler am See) und aus Nordwest-Ungarn (Gönyü) zeigen, sind die spätäneolithischen Gräber unter Hügeln nicht in die Erde eingetieft, sondern wurden die Toten auf dem Niveau der ursprünglichen Erdoberfläche bestattet.

Eine ähnliche Sitte kann man zum großen Teil auch bei den Gräbern unter Hügeln in der Frühbronzezeit feststellen. Offensichtlich dauerte hier in der Bestattungsweise eine längere Tradition an. Am Ende der älteren und am Anfang der mittleren Bronzezeit änderte sich die Bestattungsweise und die Verstorbenen wurden in eingetieften Grabgruben bestattet. Zu den ältesten Hügelkonstruktionen gehören diejenigen in welchen das Zentralgrab mit Kreisgräben umgeben ist. Wie die neuesten Ergebnisse von Ausgrabungen aus der Südwest-Slowakei (or better Südwest-Slowakei) (Jelšovce), Südmähren (Borovice) und Niederösterreich (Franzhausen II) gezeigt haben, hat der Brauch, in den Kulturen der mittleren Bronzezeit im mittleren Donauraum, d. h. in der Karpatischen- und Mitteldanubischen Hügelgräberkultur und offensichtlich auch in der Vorlausitzer Kultur, die Gräber mit Hügeln zu versehen, seinen Ursprung in den Kulturen des jüngeren Abschnittes der älteren Bronzezeit, d. h. in der Maďarovce-, Věteřov-Kultur und in der Böheimkirchner Gruppe der Věteřov-Kultur. Diese Bestattungsweise entwickelte sich von der älteren Bronzezeit kontinuierlich in die mittlere Bronzezeit, als ein natürlicher Bestandteil der genetischen Entwicklung der einzelnen Hügelgräberkulturen.

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TUMULUS CULTURE BARROWS IN THE POLISH LOWLANDS THE CASE OF THE CEMETERY IN SMOSZEW

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ABSTRACT

Tens of barrows of the Tumulus culture create a clearly visible element on the cultural landscape of the south western part of the Polish Lowlands. Paradoxically, the abundance of this category of archaeological source does not broaden our knowledge about the societies that left them behind. The majority of cemeteries were discovered, mapped and excavated mainly in the first half of the 20th c. Hence, the existing plans of sites are usually very schematic and inaccurate. In many cases excavators were careless and they neither recognized nor documented details of unearthened features.

In this paper we present the results of the geophysical study of a well-preserved cemetery in Smoszew. With the use of precise elevation measurements and modelling, the complete shape and size of the cemetery were identified. Magnetic prospection of one of the barrows revealed previously unknown layers of organic materials, possibly related to a burial pit.

INTRODUCTION

In Poland, the Tumulus culture was identified in the 1920s. Despite a long history of research and the publication of its monograph,¹ Polish archaeology still wrestles with some basic problems related to the cultural unit.

The knowledge of sources related to the Tumulus culture (TC) is based primarily on artefacts from sepulchral features (*fig. 1*). However, many of them were obtained by amateur archaeologists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and others have never been published.²

Papers discussing specific regions³ and aspects of the TC published recently, relying only marginally on the results of new excavations, do not improve significantly the poor knowledge of TC in Poland.

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1. Gedl 1975a.

2. Lasak 2001, p. 294.

3. Kłosińska 1997; Lasak 2001.

The major research problem is the unsatisfactory degree of advancement made in building a TC chronology. The use of the traditional terminology, highly stretched in relation to time, of the *Older Bronze Age* or the *II period of the Bronze Age* type, and an almost complete lack of radiocarbon dates for assemblages directly related to a TC context prevent researchers from grasping the intricacies of the process which made the culture and determining precisely its major stages (if only in the traditional form of defining the states of an archaeological culture: early, classic and late). Calls coming in from neighbouring areas, related to the rise and decline of TC, relying mainly on typology, are hardly any different.⁴

FORMAL FEATURES OF BARROWS

Although TC is associated with many flat cemeteries,⁵ barrows are the main grave form in TC.⁶ They were built of soil – a coat thus created covered frequently occurring stone elements. Mounds built of soil only are rare exceptions.⁷ In the set of excavated barrows, no single typical structural form has been observed.⁸ The most frequent stone elements of barrows are circumferential rims,⁹ sometimes segmental or double ones,¹⁰ pavements and stone nuclei covering the burial proper.¹¹ An absolutely unique structure was found in the barrow in Grabonóg (site 23) in which the stone nucleus was joined to the circumferential rim with four radial rows of stones.¹²

The vast majority of barrows contained single inhumations. We know of few examples of cremations or partial burning of bodies. The rare occurrences of burned bones in barrow mounds are predominantly interpreted as being the remains of secondary funerary practices.¹³

The dead were placed in pits or on the surface of the ground underneath stone cairns. Sometimes, bodies were protected with wooden coffins.¹⁴

Smoszew barrows, explored in 1923, differed from one another mainly in size. Differences in height and diameter are significant enough to assume (despite erosion) that they reflect original diversity. They were laid out differently as well.¹⁵ Two smaller barrows (nos. 2 and 21) had stone pavements. In the other three examined barrows (nos. 1, 8, 20), standing out due to their large size (up to 21 metres in diameter and 2.20 metres in height), stone rings were placed along their circumference. In these cases, inhumations were covered by stone nuclei, which also differed from one another. In barrow no. 8, the cross-section of the nucleus was semicircular, while in barrow 20 it had the form of a truncated cone. The preserved drawings, however, prevent us from determining the shape of the stone nucleus of barrow no. 1.¹⁶ In the case of barrows nos. 8 and 20, these elements were placed centrally, while in barrow no. 1, the stone nucleus was moved north towards its circumference. Only

4. Stuchlík 1992; Dohnal 1995; Bátora 2004.

5. Kowiańska-Piaszykowska 1966; Lasak 2001, p. 295.

6. Gediga 1978, p. 145.

7. *E.g.* site Sadowie, barrows 21 and 22; Lasak 2001, p. 297.

8. Gediga 1978, p. 145; Lasak 2001, p. 297, 300.

9. *E.g.* site Wolica Nowa, cf. Grygiel 2000, p. 233.

10. *E.g.* site Niedary, cf. Butent 1992, fig. 7.

11. Gedl 1975a, p. 89.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 89, fig. 8.

13. Lasak 2001, p. 301.

14. Butent 1992; Lasak 2001, p. 300.

15. Kostrzewski 1922-1924, p. 261.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 262-268, fig. 3-4, 10, 14, 20.

in the case of barrow no. 8, was a roughly rectangular burial chamber recorded, placed underneath a stone nucleus.¹⁷ Drawing on fragmentary information in the report, a tentative hypothesis can be put forward about the presence of timber structural elements, of which little is known, within barrow no. 1. What is meant here is a single posthole of a recorded diameter of 20-25cm.¹⁸ Such structures are, however, rare.¹⁹

THE HISTORY OF INVESTIGATIONS AT THE CEMETERY IN SMOSZEW (SITE 1)

Being monumental elements in the landscape, the Smoszew barrows attracted the interest of antiquarians from an early date. The barrows were referred to in the literature for the first time in the second half of the 19th c.²⁰ The first amateur excavations were probably carried out around 1861. For it is to this year that the discovery of a hoard of 21 bracelets is dated. They date back to the period of Ha A1-Ha A2 and were supposedly placed in the mound of one of the barrows.²¹

The first excavations supervised by the archaeologists Kostrzewski and Zakrzewski were carried out in 1923. They were initiated by the then headmaster of the German Grammar School in Krotoszyn, Sievert. To carry out the physical work, 30 soldiers from nearby barracks were detailed.²² It follows from the report by Kostrzewski that he did not supervise personally the exploration of all features.²³ The barrows, irrespective of their structure and size, were excavated in a relatively short time: 1 to 2 days each.²⁴ Beginning with the outer rim, the earth coat was removed, moving towards the centre of the mound.²⁵ In not a single barrow were the remains of a skeleton recorded.²⁶ Apart from the fact that this could have been caused by the specific soil conditions,²⁷ hasty work performed by unqualified labourers and careless cleaning of discovered strata, which can be seen in photographs (collections of Poznań Archaeological Museum), must have resulted, however, in limiting the number of traces of original inhumations and obtaining only a modest assemblage of movable finds from barrow interiors. Moreover, the methodology of excavation used prevented researchers from observing any special techniques applied in the building of the barrows.²⁸

SITE LOCATION

The cemetery in Smoszew is one of many sepulchral sites lying on the border between the provinces of Silesia and Wielkopolska, in the collection basins of the Barycz and Obra rivers.²⁹ A high concentration of barrows is found in the southeast of the Kalisz Upland. In this area, marked by the present-day towns of

17. *Ibid.*, p. 266, fig. 14-15.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 262; Lasak 2001, p. 300.

19. E.g. site Obrót, barrow 13, cf. Gedl 1975, p. 91; Görner 2002, p. 136.

20. Kostrzewski 1922-1924, p. 259.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 259-260; Blajer 2001, p. 334.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 265, 267-268.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 262, 265, 267.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

27. Gedl 1975a, p. 87.

28. Lasak 2001, p. 300; Görner 2002, p. 119-125.

29. Butent 1992, p. 82, fig. 25.

Krotoszyn, Odolanów and Ostrów Wielkopolski, next to Smoszew, we know of sites in Glińnica, Sadowie and Wysocko Wielkie.³⁰ It is hard to tell precisely to what degree land cultivation in the 20th c. modified the original distribution of barrows.

The area in question has remained, for the most part, woodland to this day, which has saved many features from destruction.³¹

LAYOUT OF THE CEMETERY

Information on the layout of TC barrow cemeteries shows no permanent logic in their arrangement in space. We know of linear and group layouts, and of single graves placed independently of one another.³² The fact that no large barrow cemetery has been thoroughly explored makes for a lack of chronological data, not permitting a reconstruction of the process of creation of funerary space.

In the case of the Smoszew cemetery the number of barrows was estimated at 34-35 in the interwar period.³³ The plan of the site, giving the concentration of features discussed here and single barrows located nearby, was made by Sievert.³⁴ However, it does not permit, and neither does a new site plan (*fig. 3*), the formulation of a possible principle of locating individual barrows.

GRAVE GOODS

In all burial forms known in TC, relative paucity of ceramic goods is visible. Most often, single vessels or their fragments were deposited in graves. In general discussions, the importance of bronze objects is stressed as they were deposited in graves more often.³⁵ In the latter case, adornments prevailed, with a small share of weapons (*fig. 1*).³⁶

As has been mentioned above, the artefacts unearthed in Smoszew are few, of which some (chiefly strongly fragmented pottery) do not yield to unequivocal assessment. Generally, the style and technology of the pottery and its fragments fit into the broad chronological concept of the Older Bronze Age.

Next to pottery, the 1923 investigations supplied also metal goods both corroded fragments and complete objects.

A bow-like pin (*fig. 2: a*) belongs to the type with flattened and rolled head and is dated to the classic phase of TC.³⁷ Actually, the form has a longer chronology.³⁸ Pins with flattened rolled heads were one of the types most frequently deposited in TC graves (*fig. 1*); however, they have never occurred in hoards associated with the culture.³⁹

Of two discovered dagger blades, only one has survived (*fig. 2: b*). It has three rivets for fastening a handle. The other blade, unearthed in a very poor state, has not survived in the storage facilities of the Poznań Archaeological Museum.

30. Lasak 2001, p. 385-386.

31. Gediga 1978, p. 146.

32. Lasak 2001, p. 294-295.

33. In the report on the investigations both figures are given without any explanation of this inaccuracy.

34. Kostrzewski 1922-1924, p. 259-269, fig. 1-2.

35. Gedl 1975b, p. 25; Gediga 1978, p. 146.

36. Lasak 2001, p. 304.

37. Gedl 1983, pl. 36: 588; pl. 60.

38. Blajer 2001, p. 194-195.

39. Dąbrowski 1985, p. 128, 129, fig. 13.

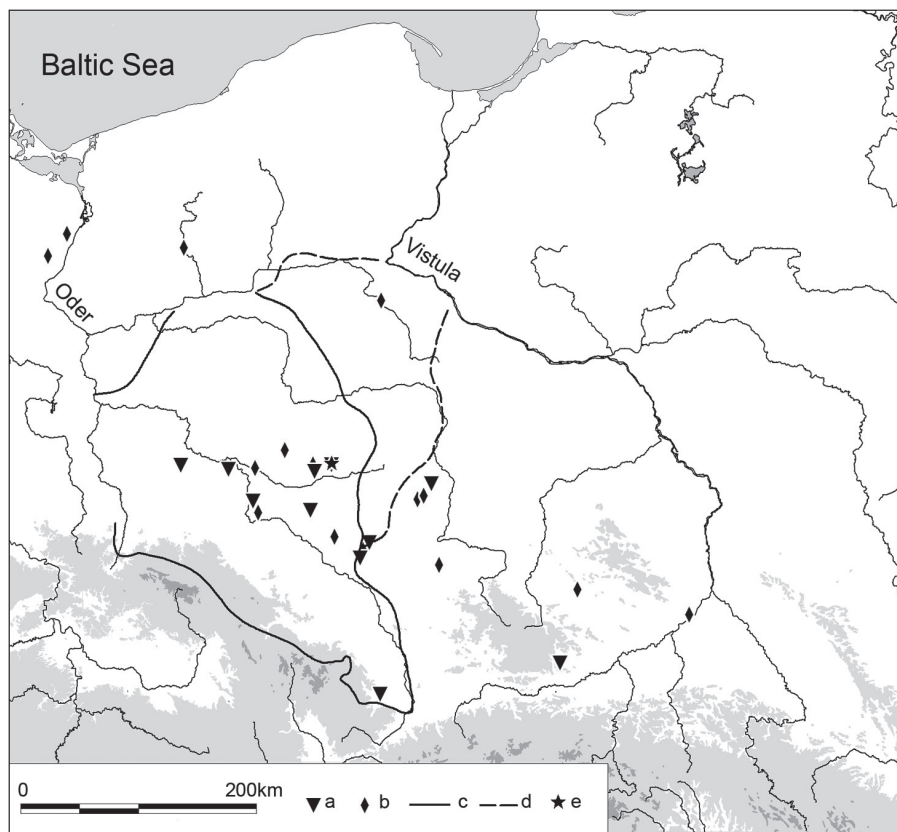


Fig. 1 – a: TC graves with daggers; b: bow-like pins; c: distribution of TC; d: zone of TC influences; e: site no. 1 in Smoszew (after Dąbrowski 1985; 2004).

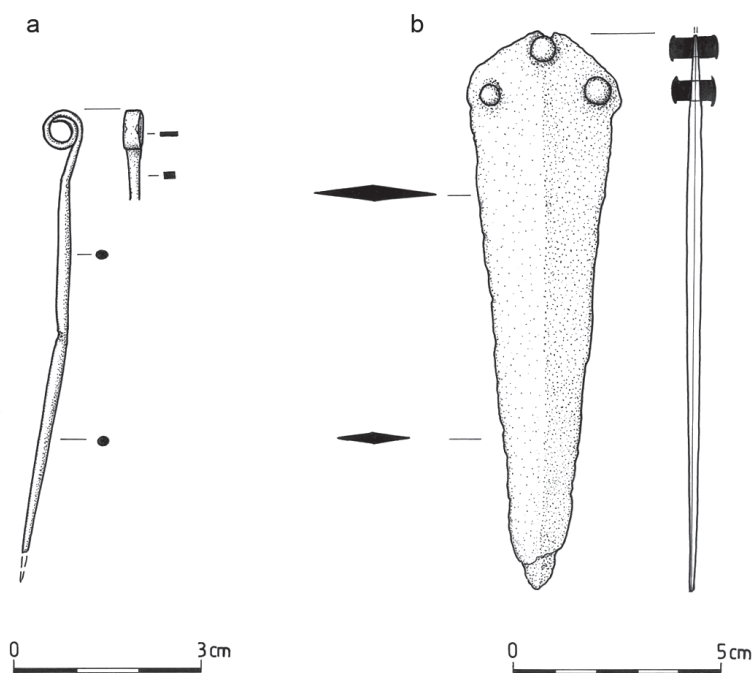


Fig. 2 – Bronze finds from the cemetery in Smoszew; a: bronze pin from barrow no. 1; b: bronze dagger blade from barrow no. 8 (collection of the Archaeological Museum in Poznań).

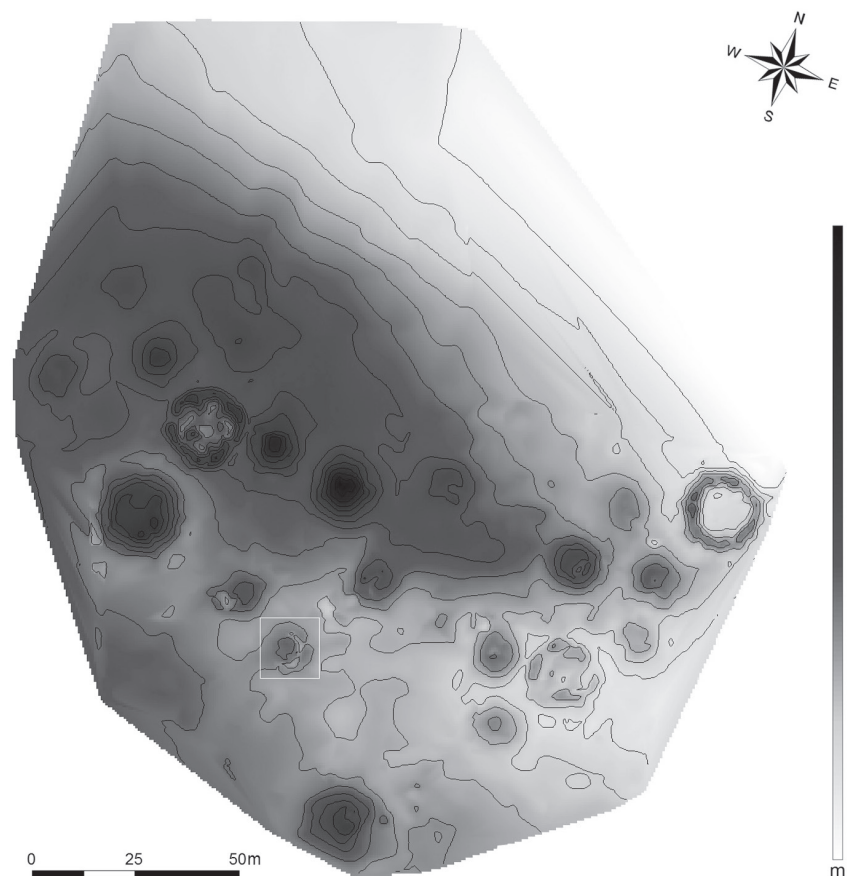


Fig. 3 – Smoszew – grey scale digital elevation model (triangulation with smoothing) of the surveyed part of the cemetery overlaid with the contour map (relative height; isolines every 25cm). Barrow no. 15 marked with a white line.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Today the Smoszew cemetery stands out from other features of this type because of the good state of preservation. For this reason, in 2007-2008, an attempt was made to verify and revise the data obtained following the excavations conducted in the 1920s. It must be stressed that neither were grave pits discovered nor the stratigraphy of the mounds identified. Moreover, no site contour plan was made, while the published plan represents the shape and size of mounds in a highly idealized manner. The documented location of individual barrows does not match the reality, either. Nevertheless, the archival results of excavations, *i.e.* the identification of the internal structure of the barrows as well as their chronology and cultural affiliation, permitted us to choose the optimal methods of prospection and facilitated the interpretation of its results.

The surveying was begun by making a detailed elevation model of the cemetery using an electronic tachymeter. The three principal methods of visualization and analysis of indistinct reliefs of archaeological sites were used: (a) extremely dense contouring of the elevation data (using narrow contour intervals), (b) pseudo-three-dimensional views with extreme vertical exaggeration (by several hundred per cent), and (c) analytical surface shading using variable light-source angles.⁴⁰ In sum, the whole cemetery, as it is known from publications,⁴¹ was mapped inasmuch as it coincides with today's range of a dense coniferous forest, *i.e.* an area of 22915sqm. The

40. Kvamme *et al.* 2006, p. 92.

41. Kostrzewski 1922-24, p. 260, fig. 2.

number of measurements made is 2621. A small extension of the studied area was possible only in the north-western part. The obtained data were processed further using a GIS application.

In the first stage of analysis of the spatial data collected at the cemetery a digital elevation model (DEM) was generated in shades of gray with a contour plan, generated from the model, superimposed upon it (*fig. 3*). The DEM was made using the Vertical Mapper software and Delaunay's algorithm of triangulation with smoothing, yielding a triangulated irregular network (TIN). The obtained image showed considerable differences in the state of preservation of individual features.

Graves with mounds of the greatest relative height could be clearly seen already at the contour cut-off every 25cm. Relying on the obtained image, it was possible to identify some features with barrows on the published plan of the cemetery. Since some expected mounds were not visible on an isoline map and, even more importantly, there were problems with identifying these features in the field, a contour plan was generated with contours drawn every 5cm. A reservation must be made here that it is not certain today whether all the features drawn by Sievert were indeed barrows. In several cases, it would be necessary to verify the recorded forms by excavation or geophysical examination. Upon comparing the original plan with images obtained now, several differences can be observed. What attract our attention in the first place are discrepancies in the location of some barrows. The map identifies the barrows that were dug up or damaged due to tree removal or small robber's digs.

For the purpose of comparing the location of mounds recorded using digital modelling of the cemetery micro-relief, an attempt was made to superimpose the feature outlines from Kostrzewski's plan onto the digital elevation model generated with the Surfer software, using the method of kriging. The absence of common reference points for both site plans necessitated an imposition of layers by trial and error. The obtained picture showed discrepancies in the location of several features of up to 15 metres.

The way the barrows were dug up in the 1920s, combined with soil conditions unfavourable to the survival of organic matter, greatly lessened the possibility of identifying barrow structures. A comparison of excavations in Smoszew with analogous discoveries on other TC sites reveals a surprising absence of recorded grave pits or organic material structural elements (mainly coffins), or human remains on the former site. In addition, the structure of layers in grave mounds was not explored. A potential presence of organic remains in the features made us conduct a test magnetic prospection of a selected barrow. A possible absence of any grave goods and the practice of filling grave pits with the same earth that was dug out first

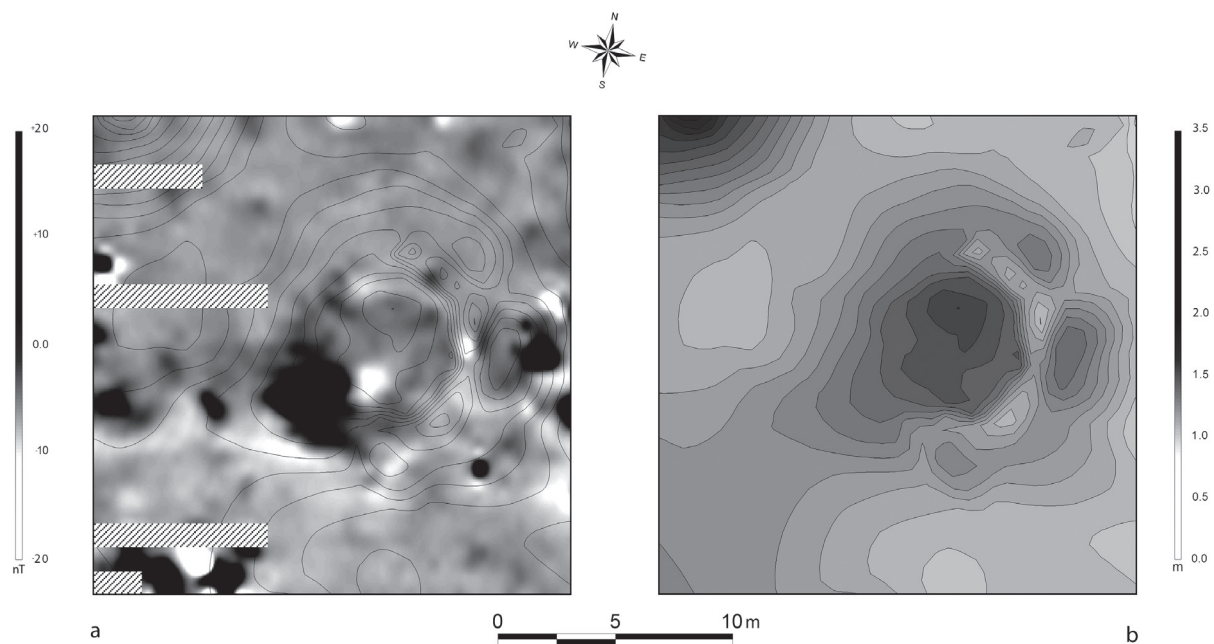


Fig. 4 – Smoszew, barrow no. 15, a: magnetic map (Bartington Fluxgate Grad 601-1 magnetometer; sampling grid 0.5 x 0.25m, dynamics -20/+20 nT) overlaid with the elevation map (relative height; isolines every 5cm); b: hypsometric map (relative height; isolines every 5cm).

unfortunately make the differences in magnetism small between the filling of a feature and the sediments surrounding it. Even if a feature is carefully excavated, it could be difficult to identify a burial when there are no grave goods and where soil conditions cause a complete decomposition of bone remains.⁴² In such cases, the only trace of a skeleton could be a subtle earth colouring that can be easily overlooked or misinterpreted. Decaying wood – timber posts, beams, coffins, etc. – is an environment in which the magnetotactic bacteria, which are to be found in soil, grow. They produce chains of intercellular crystals of magnetite whereby they respond to the magnetic field of the Earth.⁴³ The magnetite can be easily identified through magnetic measurements or electronic microscopy, hence, the activity of the bacteria is currently believed to be the primary cause of magnetism of wood traces in soil.⁴⁴ In the cases of grave features, magnetic anomalies may also be caused by the presence of human remains alone. For, on average, the body of an adult person contains approx. 3-4 grams of iron. Other reasons arguing for the use of the magnetic method included the custom of depositing pottery and bronze objects in TC graves, traces of fire in grave pits and manifestations of cremation rituals. Metal objects create a very strong magnetic field. If they are garbage, either buried shallowly or scattered on the ground, they strongly interfere with the local magnetic field and make it difficult to register anomalies, having usually weaker profiles, caused by the presence of archaeological features. In the case of deeply sunk graves or those covered by mounds we deal with a reverse situation as the presence of metal grave goods makes it more likely that a grave will be discovered. However, the most important source of magnetic anomalies for archaeology is thermomagnetization. This process occurs in materials subjected to high temperatures, *i.e.* pottery, charcoals, remains of metal smelting, ashes, pieces of daub, etc. Also, local changes in magnetic properties of soil may result from the concentration of and chemical changes in component minerals of iron. A concentration of minerals of iron and organic matter may trigger microbiological mechanisms of magnetism enhancement.⁴⁵ With the exploration of grave features, it is likely that disturbances caused by stone elements, consisting of rocks having magnetic properties, will be captured as well.⁴⁶

The magnetic prospection was carried out within the area of 20 × 20 metres, covering barrow no. 15 together with its context. The feature was chosen because of its accessibility and the fact that it was almost levelled, which made it certain that structural details would be captured, provided they lay within the range of this method, *i.e.* up to one metre deep. The measurements were made with a Bartington Fluxgate Grad 601-1 magnetometer, with the accuracy of 0.1 nT, every 0.25 metre, in a parallel mode and along measurement profiles 0.5 metre apart. The results were visualized in 256 shades of gray in the form of a magnetic field gradient map (dynamics -20/+ 20 nT), generated from the ArcheoSurveyor software, version 2.2 (*fig. 4: a*).

The high values of magnetic field in the central part of the barrow are hypothetically related to the remains of a mound. It was built with the humus taken from the immediate vicinity of the grave and characterized by higher magnetism. The occurrence of a high-magnetism anomaly resembling the digit eight is caused by the presence of an organic material concentration and/or a construction of stones with magnetic minerals content. Even more importantly, its location coincides with the central elevation, which asymmetrically stretches south-west there (*fig. 4: b*). Taking into consideration the fact that the feature is a grave and thus the presence of human remains is very likely (placed in a coffin and/or a pit densely lined with stone rubble), as evidenced by earlier finds of inner stone mounds, a hypothesis may be proffered about the discovery of a grave pit, covered by a stone nucleus. The latter is indicated by a small swelling in the micro-relief of the mound remains. The magnetic anomaly might be an effect of the decomposition of a human body and/or the rotting of a hypothetical wooden coffin or possibly other organic materials (a bier, furs, grave goods, etc.). A bow-like structure encircling the central mound from the east, showing no increase in the magnetic field and consisting of segments of stone pavements, is certainly a relic of a stone circle, known from barrows excavated earlier. To make the above data more accurate, it would take a resistivity and GPR surveys to identify stone structures and boring to analyze successive layers.

42. Mays 1998, p. 15-21; Linford 2004, p. 167-168.

43. Neubauer 2001, p. 16.

44. Fassbinder, Stanjek 1993.

45. Linford 2004, p. 168.

46. Gaffney, Gater 2004, p. 136.

CONCLUSIONS

Due to the specific character of TC sources, known for the most part from sepulchral sites explored in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it is vital to work out a new research methodology. The suggested procedure allows researchers to verify archival information and collect new data as well.

The methodology used enabled a detailed recording of the complex form of the cemetery, which is subject to continuous destruction brought about by both natural processes and contemporary human activity. The spatial data in combination with geophysical research results may serve as a point of departure for the planning of future excavations. At the same time they permit researchers to limit the scope of invasive investigations to an absolutely necessary minimum to obtain comprehensive knowledge on the grave structure.

Systematic investigations of TC barrows, in time to come, may greatly contribute to the broadening of our knowledge on the societies that emerged after the disintegration of the cultural structures of the Early Bronze Age. The features, however, are also very significant for another reason: they are among the rare examples of perfectly preserved cultural landscape elements.

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VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE MONUMENTS

LATE ENEOLITHIC BURIAL MOUNDS IN FORESTED AREAS OF CENTRAL MORAVIA

Jan TUREK*, Jaroslav PEŠKA**, Andrea MATEJÍČKOVÁ***

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is to contribute archaeological data towards the ongoing discussion on the missing evidence of barrows of the late Eneolithic Corded Ware and Bell Beaker period in Central Europe. A variety of problems, such as demographic representation of cemeteries, burial customs and the spatial structure of funerary areas is associated with the missing barrows. The sites, such as Dřevohostice (East Moravia), represent one of the few examples of Eneolithic cemeteries with remaining surface relics of funerary activities. We also stress that the variability of late Eneolithic funerary monuments is, however, commonly reduced by modern ploughing and erosion. Therefore, the evidence from exceptionally preserved barrow cemeteries in Central Moravia is enormously important for the reconstruction of the structure and extent of cemeteries in the ploughed landscape. Such sites represent an exceptional opportunity to investigate the evidence of otherwise missing and highly invisible archaeological data. Furthermore, in some respects, this opportunity may be thought of as the key to answering many of the questions regarding Late Eneolithic funerary archaeology. In this paper we are going to summarize the aims and methodology of recent research into the late Eneolithic Corded Ware and Bell Beaker burial mounds.

BARROWS, PERISHABLE MONUMENTS

Burial rites of the late Eneolithic period in Central Europe were concerned with the symbolic demonstration of social status and the representation of social categories. The funerary symbolism of the Corded Ware and Bell Beaker cultures use similar expressions, such as body positioning and orientation of inhumations and choice of significant gendered grave goods (Turek 2000; Turek, Černý 2001) (*fig. 1-3*). Another common phenomenon of late Eneolithic burial customs was the covering of grave cuts with burial mounds. Traces of prehistoric burial mounds disappeared in most of the deforested lowland regions of Central Europe due to intense agricultural cultivation. This is very probably the reason why we cannot

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detect the Corded Ware and Bell Beaker burial mounds in the current countryside of Bohemia, Moravia and neighbouring regions. Another important destructive factor is erosion. The purely earthen burial mounds of the Corded Ware and Bell Beaker periods are generally more affected by erosion than the burial mounds of other prehistoric periods which were more reliant on stone in their construction (*e.g.* Middle Bronze Age Tumuli Culture, Hallstatt D, Early Middle Ages, etc.). As we know from the subterranean parts of late Eneolithic graves, stone was only used for construction of burial mounds on rare occasions. The sunken grave cuts contain very small amounts of stone, if any at all. This appears to be in stark contrast to the subsequent Únětice period. The Únětice graves, especially of the “classical” period are usually found packed with stone (especially in Central Bohemia). However, it needs to be observed that the survival rate of Únětice barrows is also very low (*e.g.* Čejetický-Choboty, District Mladá Boleslav, cf. Plesl 1959).



Fig. 1 – Prague-Kobylišy. Bell Beaker child burial in male position (photograph by J. Turek).



Fig. 2 – Tišice (district Mělník), Bell Beaker female burial with mixed gendered artefacts (photograph by J. Turek).



Fig. 3 – A reconstruction of the Bell Beaker burial from Tišice (photograph by P. Berounský).

TRACING THE INVISIBLE BARROWS

It is possible to divide the evidence of late Eneolithic barrows into four categories:

- visible remains of barrows;
- negative traces of burial mounds within the spatial structure of a multi-period funerary area;
- re-use of late Eneolithic barrows by early Bronze Age burials;
- traces of objects from burial mounds secondarily deposited within the fill of a grave cut.

The visible remains

Visible remains of Corded Ware barrows are very rare in Bohemia. Currently the only known cases come from Selibice and Toužetín (both in the district of Louny) in North Bohemia (Moucha 2000) and from Roztoky Velký háj (in the district of west Prague) in Central Bohemia (*fig. 5*). While the barrows in North Bohemia come from damaged sites, the barrow from Roztoky Velký háj was excavated in the mid 19th c. within a currently existing barrow cemetery. It is, therefore, quite possible that more barrows remain undiscovered in the forested area near Roztoky. The forested areas of eastern Moravia currently represent the only region of The Czech Republic, where Corded Ware and perhaps also Bell Beaker barrows are still visible up to the present day (*e.g.* Dřevohostice, Kostelec na Hané, Turovice, etc.). The majority of east Moravian barrows were selectively excavated as early as the 19th and early 20th centuries (Červinka 1911). Fortunately, some of the original site records are of reasonable quality and it is generally possible to re-identify the plans of excavated graves, burial assemblages and the location of individual barrows within the cemetery (for Corded Ware: Šebela 1999; similar revision of data in general for the late Eneolithic period was carried out by A. Matějčková) (*fig. 4*).

The 19th/20th c. data from the Moravian barrow cemeteries suggest that the barrows were created using soil with as little stone as possible, that some barrows contained multiple burials and that there are traces of secondary insertions of later burials into the mounds which are above ground.

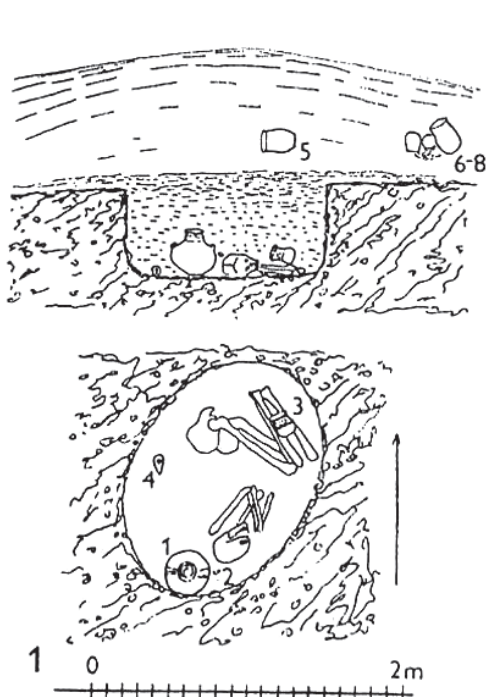


Fig. 4 – Němetice (district Vsetín) barrow 7. The original (1908) record by I. L. Červinka showing a section through the mound, with the primary Corded Ware inhumation burial in sunken grave pit and at least one later Corded Ware cremation burial within the mound levels (after Šebela 1999, pl. 75).

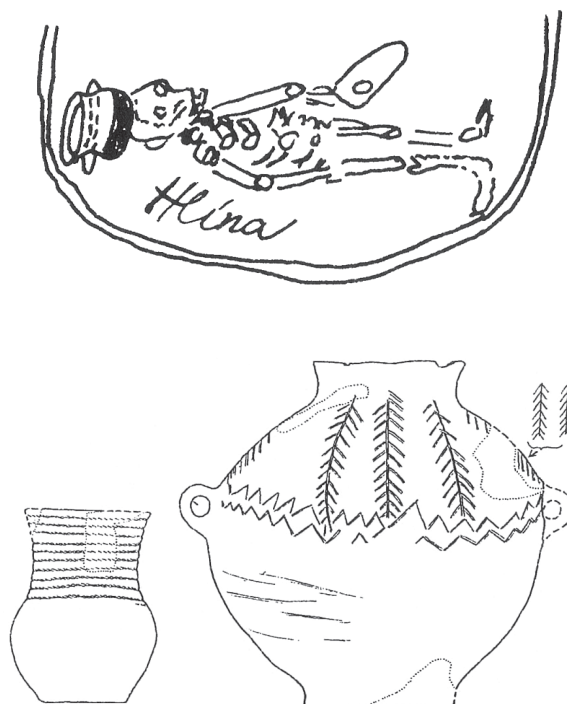


Fig. 5 – Roztoky (district Prague-west) Corded Ware burial assemblage and plan of the grave excavated and recorded in a barrow by V. Krolmus in 1854 (after Sklenář 2008, p. 193-194, fig. 9-10).

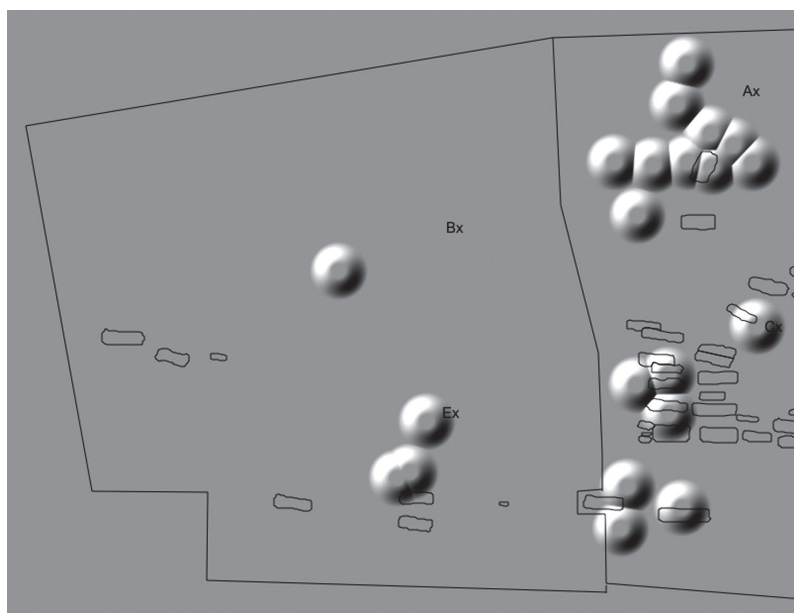


Fig. 6 – Brandýsek (district Kladno). A model of the funerary area showing the spatial relationship between the Late Eneolithic-Corded Ware barrows and Early Medieval cemetery respecting the perimeter of burial mounds (after Šmejda 2001).

The negative evidence

Within the multi-period, densely used funerary areas with a longer tradition of funeral function, negative vestiges of burial mounds may be traced within the spatial structure of grave cut distribution. Such barrow negatives are visible on the ground plan as empty spots of roughly circular shape. The later burials either respected the ground part of the barrow monument or cut into its enbankment, not reaching the natural ground. Such examples may be found within early Bronze Age cemeteries in Lower Austria. In Franzhausen (Neugebauer, Neugebauer 1997) there are Bronze Age burials which respect the circular perimeter of an area in the middle of which a Corded Ware grave was excavated. These are undoubtedly negative reflections of original barrows visible on the ground in the early Bronze Age, some six or seven hundred years after the Corded Ware culture. A similar pattern was recently presented by Ladislav Šmejda (2001) based on the case of the Corded Ware cemetery at Brandýsek, including the discussion of the spatial relationship between the Late Eneolithic and Early Medieval cemeteries and an earlier hypothesis of the existence of a wooden church (*fig. 6*).

Chronology, stratigraphy and re-use of monuments

Another clue suggesting the certain highlighting of the grave on the ground is the evidence of re-use of some Corded Ware and Bell Beaker graves by early Bronze Age burials. If the Bronze Age digging of a grave was targeted into or very near to the earlier grave it is very likely that it was visibly marked on the ground even three to five hundred years later. Examples may be found at Prague-Kobylišy (Turek 2005) for the Bell Beaker interference into an earlier Corded Ware grave or several cases of Early Bronze Age Únětice burials cutting into the Corded Ware graves (Březno, see Pleinerová 2000, p. 201-204, *fig. 1*; Roztyly, see Holodňák, Holodňáková 2002, p. 135-140, *fig. 1-2*) or Únětice graves (64, 62 and 71) fitted into the ring ditches (45 and 72) of Bell Beaker period at Dolní Věstonice III (Bell Beaker graves 44, 61 and 73) (*fig. 7*). These examples are only the tip of the iceberg of a frequently represented phenomenon of continuity in use of funerary areas and re-use of funerary monuments. It is more than obvious that the Corded Ware graves were visibly marked on the ground so the successors might have reused the monument even several centuries later. Therefore the stratigraphic and chronological relations of the Corded Ware and Bell Beaker burials will also be one of the essential questions examined within this project.

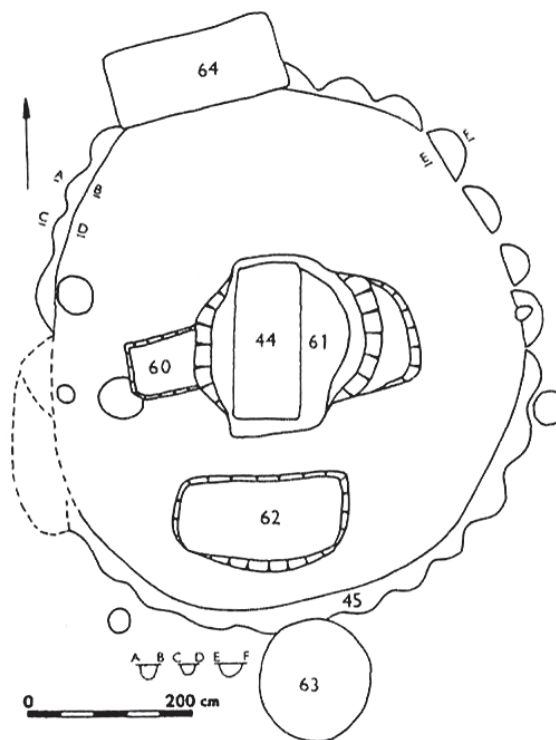


Fig. 7 – Dolní Věstonice III (district Břeclav). Únětice graves (62 and 64) fitted into and inside the ring ditch of Bell Beaker period (after Dvořák et al. 1996, p. 17-18, pl. 18-19).



Fig. 8 – The sites with evidence of late Eneolithic barrows in the “Záhoří” region of eastern Moravia, where they survived in the forested areas (by A. Matějčková).

Formational dynamics of burial mounds and post-depositional processes

Last but not least there are traces of objects found within the fill of some grave cuts that may be secondarily deposited coming from the original burial mound. The material for construction of barrows might have been gathered in the immediate vicinity of the current grave, perhaps also using earlier mounds. That could explain the appearance of decorated bell beaker fragments in the fill of Early Bronze Age Únětice graves at Soběsuky (in the district of Chomutov). These sherds may well be parts of destroyed earlier burials that were inserted into the coat of burial mounds (Turek 1993). The soil for piling up a burial mound could possibly have been carried a relatively long distance perhaps from the habitation area (such movement could possibly be part of funerary ritual). This may explain the appearance of a fragment of early Corded Ware settlement pottery inside the later Corded Ware grave as it was recorded at Čachovice (district Chomutov: Neustupný, Smrž 1989). The early Corded Ware domestic pottery, which had no relation to the burial assemblage, was probably brought from the settlement site to the cemetery together with soil as part of the construction of the burial mound. In order to examine the dynamics and sequence of mound formation a range of modern methods could be employed, such as soil micromorphology, measuring the soil magnetic susceptibility, or even methods of geochemical analysis.

VANISHING MOUNDS – MISSING EVIDENCE

In considering the integrity and completeness of the late Eneolithic funerary sites in the ploughed landscape, one has to bear in mind that the subterranean part of a burial monument is usually less than half of the original tomb construction. As suggested earlier, the amount of funerary data missing from eroded and ploughed away burial mounds is enormous. What could be missing? Later burials, votive offerings, traces of construction, reopening and possible extension and re-use of burial mounds, as well as environmental data from levels buried within the mound.

The question of the demographic structure of the Late Eneolithic cemeteries could hardly be examined based on the limited new excavation, however some important clues may also be the target of our future investigations in the Moravian forested areas. As suggested earlier (Turek 2002), there is need to focus on the question of missing evidence of female burials in certain regions of Central Europe during the Bell Beaker period. The lack of female inhumations is characteristic for the Bohemian and central German Group of Bell Beakers. Some funerary sites in Bohemia also suggest that some spatial grouping of different social categories existed within larger funerary areas, such as evidence of Bell Beaker cemeteries with a prevalence of sub-adult burials, such as Mochov or Velké Přílepy (Skružný *et al.* 2000).

The lack of female burials in some regions must have been caused by an alternative method of burial that was used for a certain number of deceased women. There are certainly many ways of disposing of the body without leaving any traces retrievable by archaeological methods. In the case of Bell Beaker burial rites, it is important to note that secondary burials were often placed into the burial mounds above ground. Such practice is known from the regions where intact barrows survived (eastern Moravia, some sites in Central Germany). The undiscovered burial mounds may be the key to the question on “missing” Bell Beaker women in Bohemia and Central Germany. Unfortunately up to the present day there has been no opportunity to test these assumptions on a site with preserved burial mounds, such as Dřevohostice (*fig. 9*).



Fig. 9 – Dřevohostice (district Přerov.) A late Eneolithic burial mound (photograph by J. Turek).

QUESTIONS TO BE EXAMINED

There are many questions on the spatial and chronological development of such barrow cemeteries (including the questions of continuity in use, satellite burials and use of space between individual barrows) that would greatly contribute towards the modelling of the late Eneolithic cemeteries excavated in these eroded and ploughed landscapes (cf. Kruřová, Turek 2004). This, however, would require a modern targeted revision excavation of such a site. It is important to emphasize that any of the preceding early excavations at Dřevohostice or other sites never investigated whole above-ground mounds or the area between the individual barrows.

BARROWS HIDDEN IN FORESTS

The following list contains the sites with evidence of late Eneolithic barrows in the “Záhoř” region of eastern Moravia, where they survived in the forested areas (*fig. 8*).

1. Burial mounds between Dřevohostice and Bezuchov, (district Přerov)

Corded Ware (CW)- 14 barrows
Bell Beaker (BB) - 7 barrows
? - 11 barrows

2. Kostelec u Holešova, district Kroměříž

Group I

CW - 4 barrows
? - 3 barrows

Group II

CW - 4 barrows
BB - 8 barrows
? - 6 barrows

Group III

CW+BB - 1 barrow
BB - 2 barrows
? - 3 barrows

Group IV

CW - 4 barrows
? - 1 barrow

Group V

BB - 2 barrows
? - 1 barrow

Group VI – Group VII – Lusatian Culture (Late Bronze Age)

Group VIII

CW - 2 barrows

Group IX

BB - 2 barrows
CW - 1 barrow

? - 1 barrow

Group X

CW - 3 barrows

Group XI

CW - 5 barrows
? - 1 barrow

Group XII

? - 5 barrows

3. Lipník nad Bečvou, district Přerov

CW - 2 barrows
? - 10 barrows

4. Němetice district Vsetín

CW - 3 barrows
? - 4 barrows

5. Pavlovice u Přerova, district Přerov**Group I-II** - Lusatian Culture (LBA).**Group III**

CW - 2 barrows

Group IV

?

6. Prusinovice, district Kroměříž**Group I**

BB - 2 barrows

Group II

CW - 4 barrows

BB - 1 barrow

? - 6 barrows

Group III

CW - 14 barrows

BB - 1 barrows

Group IV

? - 5 barrows

7. Radotín, district Přerov

CW - 1 barrow

? - 4 barrows

8. Rouské, district Přerov

BB - 2 barrows

9. Stará Ves, district Přerov

CW - 3 barrows

10. Turovice, district Přerov

BB - 6 barrows

11. Týn nad Bečvou, district Přerov**Group I** - Lusatian Culture (LBA).**mezi I. a II. skupinou**

CW - 2 barrows

Group II

CW - 2 barrows

? - 2 barrows

Group III

CW - 1 barrow

? - 6 barrows

12. Podolí, district Přerov

CW - 1 barrow

PERSPECTIVES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The group of late Eneolithic sites in central/eastern Moravia represents a unique accumulation of funerary data which is unavailable elsewhere. Due to the exceptional quality of the information, we intend to re-examine the earlier archaeological evidence of one of the sites (most likely Dřevohostice) and open a new revision excavation campaign. This modern excavation should use the current methodology of field research and pay attention to areas neglected by previous archaeological activities.

The initial part of such a project must involve revision of the evidence available, surface survey, surveying of the site and re-identification of earlier excavations with excavated objects and relics of burial mounds (including detailed elevation GIS plan). Geophysical survey, as well as systematic test-pitting, should contribute towards the reconstruction of the spatial structure of the cemetery. Prior to the excavation the condition for preservation of pollen will be tested using targeted coring.

The excavation, the destructive part of the project, should first cover a limited area, as the heritage resource management is also an important objective of the project. Perhaps two or three burial mounds and their surrounding area should be excavated primarily. Part of each burial mound should remain intact and will therefore not be affected by excavation. The samples for soil micromorphology and chemical analyses will be extracted where necessary. In addition, the monitoring of magnetic susceptibility will be synchronized with the progress of excavation and the same can be said for the ¹⁴C, trace element and ancient human DNA samples, if applicable.

After the completion of the excavation the conservation of finds and their deposition in the local museum will be provided. Each excavated burial mound will be reconstructed in its original shape prior to excavation and overall conservation and legal protection of the site will be arranged. All the collected data will be processed and analyzed in its spatial relationship (GIS plan).

The results of such an excavation should provide new and valuable data for the reconstruction of the three dimensional structure of late Eneolithic cemeteries and contribute towards a better understanding of the burial rites and the demographic structure of past communities.

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BURIAL MOUNDS IN WEST BOHEMIA

THE CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

Ladislav ŠMEJDA *

ABSTRACT

West Bohemia, the westernmost part of the Czech Republic, has always been regarded as a region abundant in prehistoric tumuli. These burial mounds were usually built in groups of variable sizes, sometimes forming vast and impressive necropoleis. These mostly contain burials dating from the Middle Bronze Age to the Early La Tène period. In the first part of my paper I am going to summarize the local history of research into this classical source of archaeological knowledge. The former aims, methods, achievements and rates of discovery will be contrasted with the contemporary situation. My intention is to demonstrate the enormous potential of the present research conditions as well as to identify their weaker aspects. Finally, possible avenues of future work will be considered.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this short paper is to highlight the main characteristics of past and present research into burial mounds in the region of West Bohemia, Czech Republic. After a brief overview of the work carried out in the 19th and 20th centuries, my attention will be redirected to present-day research activities. It should remain clear from my account that both old and recent results have their importance in the whole picture and that neither is devoid of problems and controversies of some kind.

LOOKING BACK

West Bohemia is a region with a high concentration of prehistoric barrow cemeteries. Research into them started in the 19th c. and, quite understandably, this early stage of investigation produced many portable finds but relatively little contextual information (Chytráček *et al.* 2005). However, one student of barrows in this early era was undoubtedly a bright exception to usual standards of the day. František Xaver Franc (1838-1910), originally a gardener, worked for the aristocratic Waldstein family. He was in charge of gardens

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surrounding the Kozel chateau located some 20km south of Plzeň (the capital of West Bohemia) and led landscaping projects in the Kozel estate. Here he encountered a number of well preserved archaeological monuments and, supported by his sponsor, approached the problems of their origin and interpretation. This self-educated man developed a meticulous method of excavation and recording. He left behind a thorough textual description of the situations he uncovered, accompanied with plans and sections, as well as numbered drawings of individual finds (*fig. 1*). In 1893, being already an experienced excavator, he was appointed to the museum in Plzeň as its secretary. There he continued fieldwork and published several short articles. Franc retired in 1904. Unfortunately, two major accounts on his extensive excavations could not be published for many decades and finally went to print under the editorship of V. Šaldová as late as in 1988.

The scope and quality of Franc's work is simply amazing, especially when compared to the results of his many contemporaries at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Yet this apparent quality might become a dangerous trap for the present-day student. In fact, we have only a vague understanding of his real field practice. His results look similar to modern recording systems but most probably they also contain some unrealistic, idealized component, which we must be aware of. For example, Franc most probably failed to recognize cremated bones in graves as human remains and deemed them representative of offerings of animal meat (Jílková 1961). There is a disagreement between his drawings, which show the excavated tumuli as completely dismembered structures, recorded in their whole layout and one or two sections, and the present-day field situation, where we identify clear remains of mounds cut by central and sometimes traverse trenches. A list of puzzling issues could continue: this outstanding documentation usually resulted from only one-day work in the field; Franc neither mentioned nor depicted any of the medieval finds that in fact abound on the site Štěhlavy-Hájek, thoroughly excavated by him in 1878-1882 (*fig. 2*). A new evaluation of these old reports, partly by means of re-excavation, is one of the most important tasks we face today (Šmejda 2003). It is especially so because nearly all our current knowledge of West Bohemian prehistory is in one way or another built on these early discoveries (Čtrnáct 1964; Pleiner, Rybová 1978).

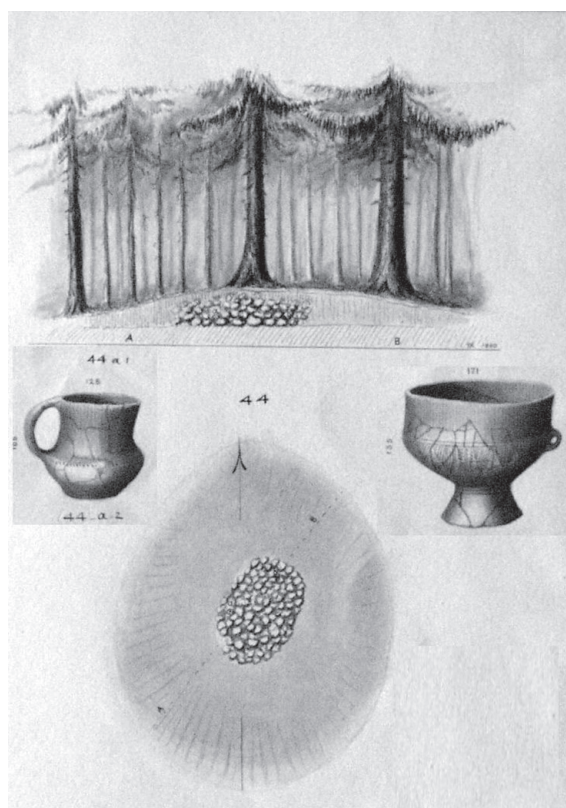


Fig. 1 – Štěhlavy-Hájek (district Plzeň-south), tumulus No. 44 (Middle Bronze Age). Section, plan and finds as recorded by F.X. Franc in 1880. Reproduction photograph made and adapted by the author. The original is kept in the Západočeské museum, Plzeň.

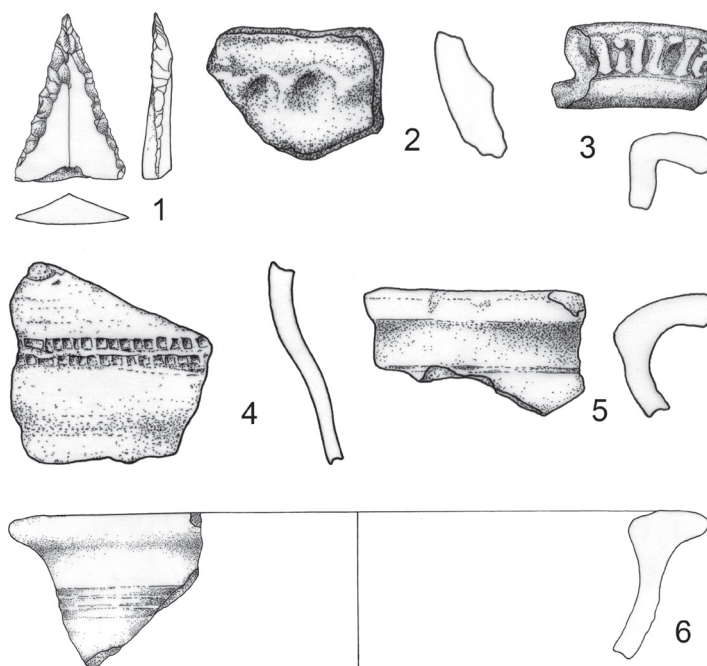


Fig. 2 – Štáhlavy-Hájek (district Plzeň-south), tumulus No. 44. A selection of finds retrieved during the re-excavation by the author in 2002. 1 – flint arrowhead, 2 – prehistoric pottery, 3-6 medieval pottery (not to scale).

THE APPEARANCE OF TUMULI IN WEST BOHEMIA

The more than a century-long history of field research has resulted in a great number of finds. A puzzling aspect of these collections is that the finds do not represent all chronological periods evenly. This is especially true of the 3rd millennium B.C., while the following overlap of the Early Bronze Age into the 2nd millennium left but faint trace in terms of sites and related movable artefacts (Jílková 1957; Šaldová 1960). This period may be aptly called the “Dark Age” of West Bohemian prehistory. Although the evidence of human activity is extremely scarce (Metlička *et al.* 2007), it would not be feasible to interpret this fact as a real lack of occupation nor as an extreme conservatism of cultural traits which led to the survival of middle Eneolithic culture into much later times. The neighbouring regions (Central and NW Bohemia, Bavaria) show explicitly that a profound cultural shift had generally been accomplished and a similar development must be expected in the area of our interest. Therefore, it is probably wiser to conclude that regional variations in the archaeological visibility of past human occupation are primarily conditioned by the depositional practices and post-depositional transformations. For some cultural groups, these forces could have brought the fossil record close to a state of complete obliteration or physical inaccessibility (Surovell, Brantingham 2007).

From the very start of the middle Bronze Age (Reinecke Br A2/B1) onwards, we are confronted with the Tumulus and following Urnfield cultures (Rybová, Šaldová 1958; Čujanová-Jílková 1970; Šaldová 1976), abundant in tumuli containing remarkable assemblages of artefacts (a range of pottery and bronze types deposited as grave goods plus infrequent finds of gold or organic materials). A long-term tradition of building tumuli was established at this time that lasted with some fluctuations up to the early La Tène period (Čujanová-Jílková *et al.* 1959; Šaldová 1971; Soudská 1994; Šaldová 1999). The society and spiritual world of these peoples must have been complex and advanced in many respects. Yet our understanding of their world is still mostly based on burials; information gathered from settlements remains surprisingly inarticulate. However,

the latest catalogues of the existing evidence on the middle to late Bronze Age residential areas brought forward a somewhat fuller picture (Militký 1996; Hůrková 2002; Jiráň 2006), offering advancements in our still insufficient knowledge.

Burials are surely known much better than settlements. Nevertheless, much crucial information is missing, such as the demographic profile of population buried in tumuli, as well as other scientific contributions. We must also be aware that even such an iconic discovery as the burial assemblage with a bronze cult wagon from Milavče has serious shortcomings in the quality of its contextual record. The particular barrow was excavated incompletely in 1880s, the report compiled with a considerable delay and revised afterwards. We know that more attention was paid to metal items than pottery and other less striking inventories (Lang 1887/1888; Čujanová-Jílková 1983 and 1984; Kytlicová 1988). This means that a great deal of caution is necessary when we study and attempt to interpret such attractive evidence. Therefore, the critique of original sources is always strongly recommended. One thing is clear though, even without detailed research. Barrows were not built for everyone despite their relatively high number in the region (my estimation based on available reports exceeds two thousand burial mounds). Seen in the time perspective, this number is the product of long-term accumulation and cannot represent more than a tiny fragment of the prehistoric population.

NEW DIMENSIONS IN THE RESEARCH OF WEST BOHEMIAN BARROWS

In opposition to the standard methodology of the past two centuries, much more attention is being paid today to non-destructive field methods. Aerial archaeology, GPS and total station topographic surveying complemented by geophysics are excellent tools of the new era (*fig. 3*), yet they inevitably have their own limitations. Above all, they have only a limited ability to reveal the chronological and cultural affinities of

studied features and in many cases an informed “guess” is all we can work out from our observations. Nevertheless, this is a productive way of gaining data for studies into cultural landscape structuring and development, long-term use and re-use of different types of monuments and symbolic/spiritual meanings of particular places and man-made burial constructions (Šmejda 2004). Traditional excavation techniques remain spatially restricted and their role now resides predominantly in rescue work on endangered or recently damaged sites (preservation by record). Besides this, and to a lesser extent, their significance now lies also in attempts to test, by means of well-targeted test pits, those preliminary hypotheses based on the results

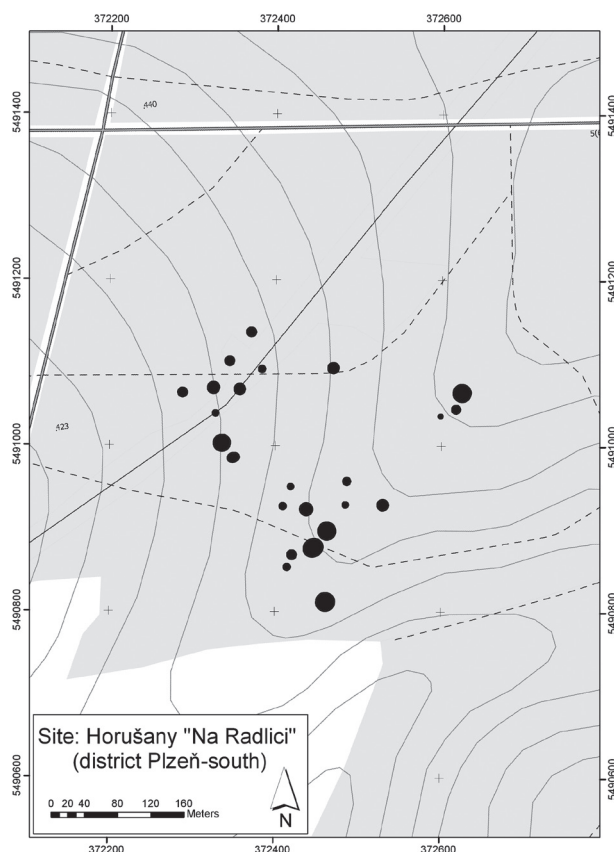
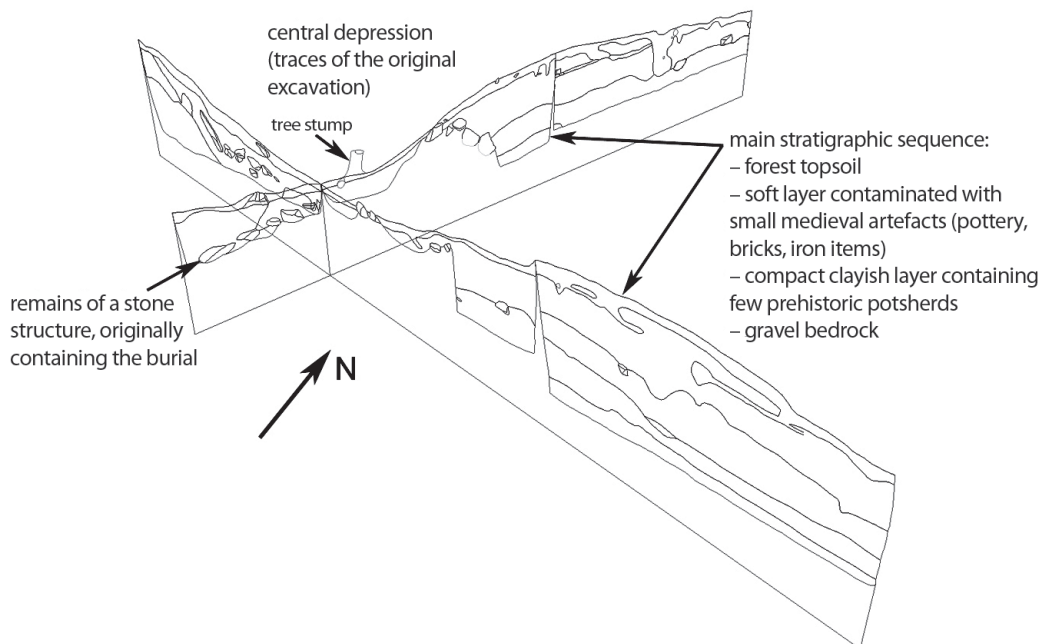


Fig. 3 – Horušany-Na Radlici (district Plzeň-south), plan of the tumulus cemetery. The author surveyed this site with M. Řezáč and E. Rampich by means of GPS and laser distance meter in 2003 (UTM coordinates shown). Dark grey: tumuli; light grey: forest; background map after CENIA (<http://geoportal.cenia.cz>).

of non-destructive research. Both rescue and academic excavations should ideally be “problem oriented” and therefore not contradictory (Roskams 2001), although in practice much depends on local research traditions and the personal experience of individuals involved in a particular project.

One paradox of modern research is that the more sophisticated methods we have in hand, the fewer the number of spectacular finds we discover. Of course this has several reasons; partly it is caused by the fact that the total volume of archaeological sources for every period is limited and non-renewable and we are slowly and inevitably closing to the point of its total obliteration from the landscape. Other factors are no less valid, like the predominant use of machinery in agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction and construction works, resulting in a lack of direct contact in daily life between people and the archaeological record. On the other hand, there is still plenty of hitherto unexplored evidence left for research, either in the field or in museum collections. Sometimes it is just a question of new tools and approaches (such as GIS or scientific analysis), which can contribute significantly to the present understanding of available evidence.

One of the methods most recently introduced into Czech archaeology is aerial survey (Gojda 1995). Even in West Bohemia, where the geology and vegetation cover do not provide optimal conditions for this type of reconnaissance, several sites had been recorded that turned out to be levelled tumuli (Šmejda 2007). The contribution of this prospection technique helps to rectify the well-known bias toward woodland, where the preservation of earthworks is generally much better than in open arable land. Geophysics can offer a valuable insight too – not only into a tumulus interior but also into what is present in its close vicinity, in seemingly empty space between barrows and in their wider surroundings. This approach represents another research topic that in the past has been largely ignored or insufficiently studied. In the geological conditions of the region in question the results seem to be slightly better from electrical resistivity surveys than magnetometry, although both methods are best combined to provide complementary data (Křivánek 2005). Excavation as the classical archaeological technique must not be omitted from this list, as quite frequently only this type of work can put diverse threads of evidence together and provide fine detail to the whole picture (*fig. 4*).



*Fig. 4 – Štěhlavy-Hájek (district Plzeň-south), tumulus No. 44. Three-dimensional CAD model of the tumulus sections (simplified). Remains of the central stone structure were removed later, which produced no additional finds (all artefacts associated with the burial were discovered by F.X. Franc in 1880, see *fig. 1*).*

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Today, prehistoric tumuli are as endangered a monument category as they have ever been. Despite this, the monitoring and responsible research of them does not seem to be a priority of the contemporary Czech archaeologist, whose major capacities are tied up with rescue archaeology projects. These are seldom carried out in remote forested areas, where tumuli remains have typically survived. Their progressive deterioration caused by forest management, the dynamics of natural factors and treasure hunters continues unrecorded except in minor and more or less haphazard undertakings.

In this connection, it can be mentioned that the important political and economic changes that have happened in the Czech Republic in the last twenty years were accidentally accompanied by the retirement of most scholars involved in barrow research in the post-war era in West Bohemia (see references). Even these factors have had serious effects on the continuity of research. Finally, the rapid development of technologies, electronics and newly introduced models of higher education in archaeology, hand in hand with the onset and substantial expansion of commercially-based rescue archaeology, changed practically everything known to previous scholarly practice (see also Harding *et al.* 2007, p. 17).

Now there is an apparent vacuum left by the retired scholars. The middle-aged archaeologists dedicated to the subject are few and much hope, therefore, rests on the new generation of young colleagues and PhD students who have recently started several interesting research projects (*e.g.* Kovářová, Křišťuf 2007; Křišťuf, Rytíř 2007). They involve untraditional themes as well as new methodological tools, which have recently become available. The only remaining problem is that projects of this kind are typically run by individual persons on a very small scale and do not produce the substantial collections of data that could potentially provide answers to the questions asked by present-day archaeological theory. The positive contribution so far resides mainly in the development and application of new prospection techniques and the scientific analyses of samples taken from spatially limited excavations.

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BURIAL MOUNDS IN THE BADEN CULTURE

ASPECTS OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS AND OUTER IMPACTS

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ABSTRACT

During the Late Copper Age development in the Carpathian Basin from the pre-Baden to Baden cultural complexes, the burial sites reveal a versatile spectrum of funerary rites. To some extent there is a conspicuous appearance of above ground burial constructions in certain regions and chronological periods; the earliest evidence of such examples in the Carpathian Basin is attested only in the immediate Baden preceding period. The relevant archaeological evidence from the middle of the 4th to the early 3rd millennium B.C., which matches the distinctive Baden regionalism, comprises the construction of substantial mounds, stone encirclements and small-scale coverings. At the least, it allows us to assume the prevalence of above ground structures. In the central Danube region these constructions are mainly of smaller extent and less substantial investment of building effort. Large above ground coverings mainly appear in peripheral zones, partly under certain external influence. In the western area most evidence is accorded to the pre- and early Baden period, while in the east they are exclusively dated to the classical and late Baden period.

INTRODUCTION

In the continuous development out of the local substratum of Middle Copper Age cultural complexes, the formation of the Baden Culture stands for a period of economical and social changes in the Carpathian Basin. Already the preceding horizon to the Baden culture renders the impression of an egalitarian society, in which social status is only partially reflected in the range of goods found in the grave inventory. At this period of the late Middle Copper Age, new elements emerge regarding the treatment of the dead as well as grave constructions.

In retrospect, throughout the earlier Copper Age, there are large and rich inhumation burial sites in the eastern plain, without substantial above ground markings. In the western part we lack cemeteries from the middle 5th until the early 4th millennium B.C. Regarding the following Epi-Lengyel horizon, the burial evidence remains poor as well (cf. Lichter 2001). The question on burial mounds in the Baden Culture consequently leads to the issue of the first occurrence of substantial above ground grave marking in the Carpathian Basin in general.

In the present paper, evidence for above ground burial constructions will be examined, based on a re-examination of nearly two hundred published burial sites (including skeletal finds) in the Carpathian Basin, dating from the pre-Baden period to the post-Baden cultures (Sachsse 2008; Sachsse 2010).

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PRE- AND EARLY BADEN PERIOD

Compared with the former periods, the most conspicuous feature of the **Furchenstichkeramik** and **Proto-Boleráz horizons** in late Middle Copper Age is the prevalence of cremation burials outside of settlements (*fig. 1*). In most cases these are scattered single urn graves or small grave groups featuring similar characteristics. The grave inventories of the majority have to be associated with the Furchenstichkeramik (*e.g.* Balatonboglár-Berekre dűlő: Bondár *et al.* 2000, p. 94-95). As part of this, a large cemetery of urn burials in Pod Kotom-jug in northern Slovenia stands out with a number of 176 cremations and remarkable characteristics (Šavel 2003). The urns were placed on the surface or in shallow pits and were most probably topped with little earth mounds. Finds nearby the graves indicate that ritual practices took place following the closure of the grave. Further evidence for above ground markings is still lacking for this period, the same being the case in the eastern Carpathian Basin. The smaller number of skeletal finds is recorded mostly in settlement contexts.

Burials from the **early Baden Boleráz group** are recorded as part of a few concentrations in the western part of the Carpathian Basin (*fig. 1*). Regarding its central distribution area, the evidence derives from the bend of the Danube River, from Lake Balaton as well as from the environs of Lake Neusiedl. A tendency for cremations outside and several inhumations inside the settlements can still be observed.

In northern Transdanubia there are conspicuous cremations framed or covered by substantial stone constructions. In the cemetery of Pilismarót-Basaharc about one hundred cremation burials were placed either on the surface or inside shallow pits. Of these, 85% feature above ground stone packing, covering an area with a maximum diameter of 3m (Torma 1973; Torma 1974/75). Other burials were covered by earthen mounds. Here, also, ritual objects were laid beside or on the mounds. Closely related are burials with stones covering them in Ipolydamásd and Malá nad Hronom (Kővári 1994; Nevizánsky *et al.* 1995/96). The absolute dominance and uniformity of this kind of burial practice in this micro-region is remarkable; that is, so long as the mentioned sites remain the only evidence of early Baden burials around the bend of the Danube River.

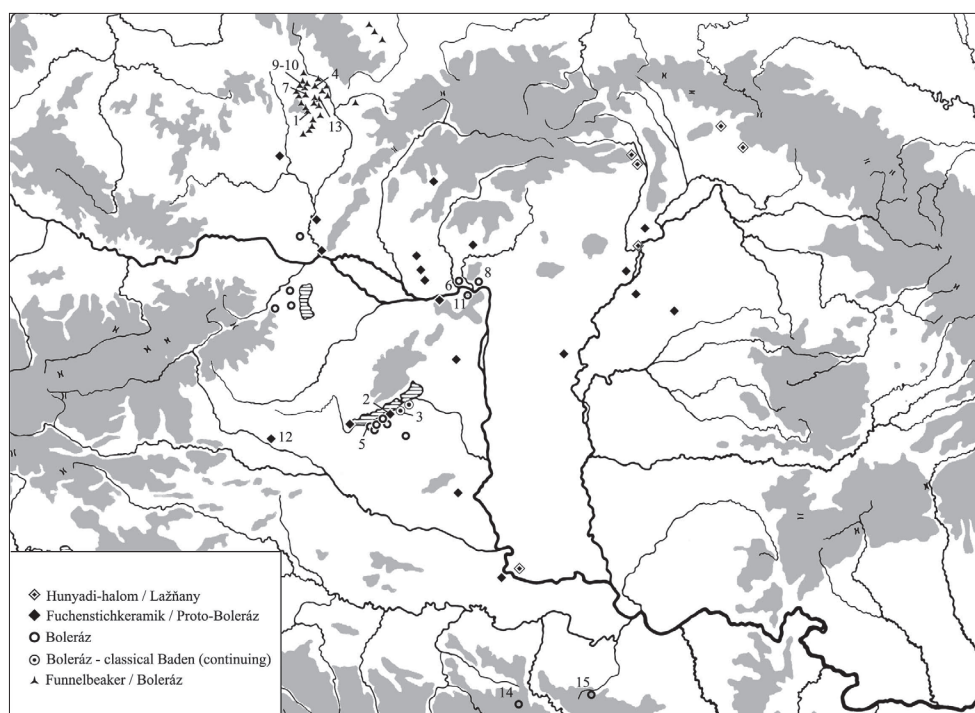


Fig. 1 – Distribution of burial sites and evidence of above ground burial constructions of the pre- and early Baden horizons in the Carpathian Basin (sites mentioned in the paper = 1: Alojzov-Spalény kopec; 2: Balatonboglár-Berekre dűlő; 3: Balatonlelle-Felső Gamász; 4: Drahanovice; 5: Fonyód-Bézsénypuszta; 6: Ipolydamásd; 7: Ludeřov; 8: Malá nad Hronom; 9: Náměšť na Hané, Křemela I; 10: Náměšť na Hané, Křemela II; 11: Pilismarót-Basaharc; 12: Pod Kotom-jug; 13: Slatinky-Boři I; 14: Šošari Sač; 15: Tolisavac-Banjevci).

Poor evidence regarding grave markings can be observed in the burial finds at Lake Balaton in south Transdanubia. The cremations recorded in Fonyód-Bézsénypuszta were covered by small earth heaps and on rare occasions by a flat stone (Banner 1956, p. 28 *sq.*). At a cemetery in Balatonlelle-Felső Gamász, with inhumation burials and rich inventories, each grave above ground was marked by a stone stele (Sófalvi 2004, p. 20).

The dominant use of stones in north Transdanubia, compared to the few examples in the south, is due to local natural resources. However the presence of stones in the grave pit fill probably can be traced back on local traditions; it is already observable in a few late and Epi-Lengyel burials (Lichter 2001, p. 305, 363).

Two further closely comparable sites at the southern edge of the Carpathian Basin – far south from the Danube alongside the middle course of the Drina River – are related to the early Baden horizon. Šošari Sač as well as Tolisavac-Banjeveci contained cremations under a mound, reaching up to 30m in extent (Govedarica 1997, p. 151 *sq.*; Govedarica 2001, p. 359 *sq.*). They attest, for the first time, the appearance of monumental burial mounds in this region. The burials inventory as well as the material from settlement sites nearby show connections to the closely related Cernavodă III-group on the Lower Danube River across the Iron Gate.

At the western fringe of the Carpathian Basin a particular situation can be observed in Moravia, obviously due to the immigration and strategic settlement policy of **Funnelbeaker** people from the west, as well as the succeeding fusion with local Epi-Lengyel, Pre- and early Baden (Šmíd 1990; Šmíd 2001; Šmíd 2004). Burial mound fields are closely connected to a system of fortified hillfort settlements, placed at the border of the Carpathian cultural sphere. From about sixteen of such mound fields, often one or even more successive burial sites can be connected to a settlement in a distance of about 200m up to 2km, featuring a similar development in three easily distinguishable periods. The cemeteries, thereby, merge the legacy of the former phase with the prelude to the following. In these numerous off-settlement burial sites, a high degree of uniformity and a clear contrast to the very few settlement burials can be observed.

The first “Baalberge” phase still comprises typical western Funnelbeaker (TRB) features, although the evidence for this is scanty; contracted inhumations in rectangular stone cists, in the typical TRB manner of the central German region, preserved in the site of Slatinky-Boři I, are connected with the TRB IB period. They were topped by oval earth mounds and stones covering a surface with a preserved extent of 24m.

More evidence exists for the second period (TRB IIA), named after the site of Drahanovice. It attests the impact of Proto-Boleráz (Baden Ia) from the southeast in the rapid and radical shift from inhumation to cremation, a previously unknown burial custom. The complex grave construction now comprises piles of stone or walls on the surface with the burials placed inside. The preserved earthen mounds reach an extent of 29m and a height of 2.7m, for example at the sites of Náměšť na Hané-Křemela I, Drahanovice and Ludeřov (Baldia *et al.* 2001; Dohnal 1974; Šmíd 1990, p. 69 *sq.*). Rectangular or oval wall constructions now enclose the grave zone on the surface and, after the deposition of one or more consecutive cremation burials, they are ultimately covered with a barrow. Just as in the previous period, the oval form and east-west orientation of the mounds are maintained but the former stone coverings vanish. During this period the climax of development in mortuary practices is reached in regard to the complexity of construction and the mounds' dimensions as well as in terms of their capacity with up to fifty eight in each necropolis.

The latest “Ohrozim” phase gives a high number of sites with striking Boleráz impact, while actually representing the end of the TRB in Moravia as well (TRB IIB/Baden Ib-IIa). In this period the monumentality and complexity of each grave construction is definitely regressive. The dimensions decline with mounds of about 5-21m in length and a maximum of twenty seven mounds in a cemetery. Moreover, construction quality declines, as only a few stones are used to offer a rudimentary outline to each grave while the covering consists of smaller earthen barrows, *e.g.* in Alojzov-Spalény kopec and Náměšť na Hané-Křemela II (Šmíd 1990, p. 82 *sq.*). Because of the reduced stone covering and careless construction, these mounds are exposed to intensive erosion. Yet cremation of the deceased is still the norm, comparable to the south eastern Boleráz area, where the remains are deposited in urns or simply in the pit together with grave goods.

Consequently, with the rise of classical Baden, the Moravian TRB and this micro-regional type are entirely disappearing. It seems that the strategic position of the settlement loses its importance and that the role of mound fields as conspicuous landmarks fades out as well. Thus settlements and cemeteries were abandoned. Evidence of burials for the following horizons in Moravia – the type of Greslové Mýto and Jeřišovice Culture – is still entirely lacking.

CLASSICAL AND LATE BADEN

In the period of the developed Baden Culture there is the absolute maximum in terms of numbers of burial sites in the Late Copper Age. The highest concentrations are observable in north and south Transdanubia, Lower Austria and the northern Tisza River region (*fig. 2*). Regarding the central Baden distribution area of northern Transdanubia the sites feature a few off-settlement burial sites and cemeteries in close concentration around the Danube. At the same time the majority of find spots, both settlement burials as well as contextual undefined burials, are distributed more widely, especially northwards. Both kinds of burial context, off-settlement and settlement burials, show remarkable characteristics in spatial range and mortuary practices (Sachsse 2008, p. 55 *sq.*; Sachsse 2010, p. 194 *sq.*).

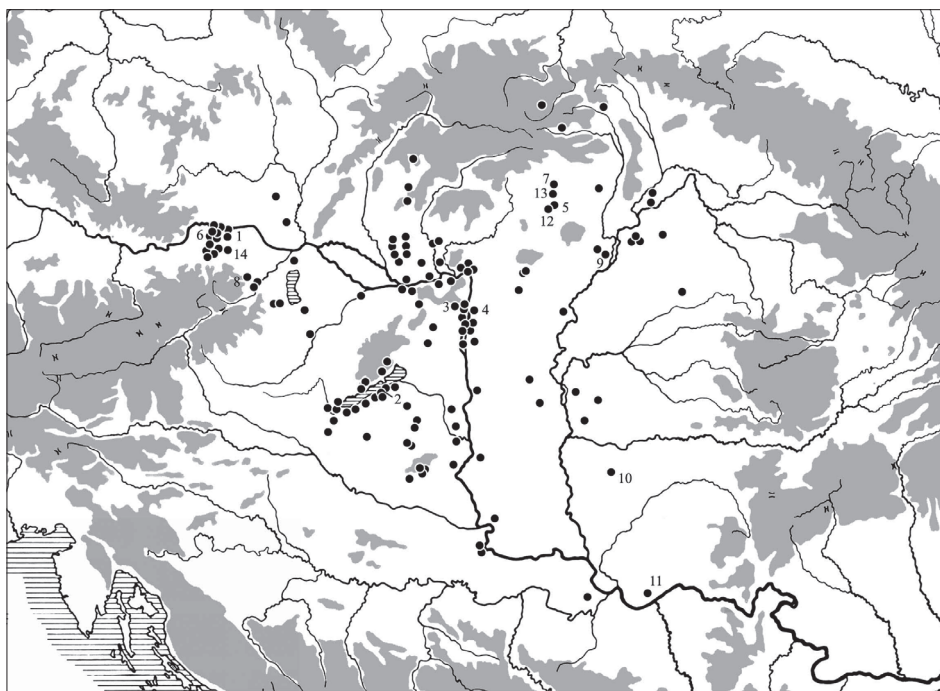


Fig. 2 – Distribution of burial sites and evidence of above ground burial constructions of classical and late Baden in the Carpathian Basin (sites mentioned in the paper = 1: Ahrenberg/Sitzenberg; 2: Balatonlelle-Felső Gamász; 3: Budakalász; 4: Budapest-Káposztásmegyer; 5: Center; 6: Franzhausen; 7: Gerner; 8: Leobersdorf; 9: Mezőcsát-Hörszögös; 10: Mokrin; 11: Skorenovac; 12: Szentsimon-Kenderföldék; 13: Včelince; 14: Wolfersdorf).

The necropolis of Budakalász (Soproni 1956, p. 111-128; MRT 1986, p. 45-47) demonstrates the continuity of regional early Baden elements in grave construction; its use begins in the final Boleráz period with cremations under stone packing. In the classical Baden period they were successively replaced by the custom of flexed inhumations. Nearly half of these younger graves was still covered by stone packing with a thickness up to 50cm or at least contained some stones in the earth fill (Soproni 1956, pl. 93 *sq.*). However, it is difficult to define to what extent these stones were once visible over the surface; probably they didn't always protrude over the upper edge of the grave. Only a small number of graves in the area of the northern Danube show the practice of stone settings as an additional feature. These are lacking from the few other cemeteries, as well as from the numerous settlement burials in northern Transdanubia. Further development in this area apparently leads to the extinction of this custom.

At the western fringe of Baden in Lower Austria two main burial customs can be distinguished.

West of Lake Neusiedl, there are inhumation and cremation burials featuring substantial stone constructions. They enclose the dead in the pit or cover the grave filling, as documented for example at

the sites of Leobersdorf (Mayer 1991, p. 33) and Wolfersdorf (Ruttkay, Teschler-Nicola 1984) and were probably covered by further mounds. This kind of grave construction continues until the following period of Mödling-Zöbing.

Secondly, and perhaps in contrast, a micro-regional type of burial, which has been recorded in the Traisen River valley, should be mentioned (Mayer 1991). Large grave pits containing inhumations or cremations are placed in wooden chambers. Sometimes the deceased was laid in the pit and then burnt together with the wooden chamber. The sites comprise single graves like at Franzhausen, where the isolated double burial was surrounded by an extended Early Bronze Age cemetery (Neugebauer, Neugebauer 1997, p. 176-177, pl. 93-94). On the other hand, they feature up to twelve or more burials located over a larger spatial distance (Ahrenberg/Sitzenberg; Neugebauer 1997, p. 451-453, 466-470).

Specific elements in this local burial custom are unique in the Baden Culture, for they show intensive contacts to the Funnelbeaker groups of Salzmünde and Bernburg to the west (Sachsse 2008, p. 61; Sachsse 2010, p. 224 *sq.*). In the Middle Germany sites, burial mounds are a dominant feature. The appearance of the described graves in the Traisen River valley and large distances between them might suggest the existence of mounds here as well. Yet there is a great difference, as no firm evidence of those is available. This fact is clearly visible at Franzhausen, where one of the Bronze Age burials disturbed the grave. This suggests the lack of a more substantial topping – whereas the mound-covered graves of the Corded Ware Culture at this site were obviously well respected (Neugebauer, Neugebauer 1997, plan 1). Consequently, despite the adoption of versatile elements of the Funnelbeaker Culture, the construction of outstanding burial mounds was apparently not adopted as a custom in the western Baden type.

The southern part of Transdanubia, that is, the region west of the Danube River and the area surrounding Lake Balaton, is quite well recorded through burials but evidence for above ground constructions remains poor. Worthy of note, however, is the cemetery of Balatonlelle-Felső Gamász, which was already in use in the early Baden period (see above). The inhumation burials in this period also feature stone steles near each grave.

The use of stones in grave construction can be further observed in the north eastern Baden territory; several cremation fields in the Sajó Valley represent a micro-regional tradition with remarkable elements in their mortuary practices. These elements can be associated with the younger classical and late Baden Ózd-Piliny group (Kalicz 1963; Kovács 1987; Koós 1994; Nevizánsky 2002; Novotná 2004). The burial sites are placed in a slightly exposed position along the course of the Sajó River between the Danube and Tisza Rivers; small burial sites at Center, Szentsimon-Kenderföldék and Včelince as well as a larger cemetery in Gemer. The graves comprised mostly of urn burials, though in some cases also of un-urned incinerated remains or symbolic burials. The cremations are placed in shallow pits or on the surface. Mostly in multiple burials, some urns consist of anthropomorphic vessels. The urns are often bordered from partly substantial stone circles or marked by single, square or oblong steles. The diameter of the enclosures ranges from *ca.* 1.5-4m and likely more. Mainly in the large sites, above the burials and stone settings larger mounds are secured or can, at the least, be hypothesised. Some are preserved at a height of more than 1m. These burial sites are located east from several contemporary hillfort settlements, partly long-lived and well fortified (Patay 1999). Within these settlements no burials have been recorded at all, in contrast to the majority of Baden territory, *e.g.* in Transdanubia, where settlement burials are a common feature.

Regarding the setting of stone steles (as observed in the cemetery of Balatonlelle in the west and in other forms in the north eastern Sajó River Valley) some further sites in the Baden territory are comparable. In Budapest-Káposztásmegyer in a classical Baden settlement a 2.25m high, hewn stele was found in the close vicinity of pits with human and animal remains within the settlement (Endrődi 1995). A biritual cemetery in Mezőcsát-Höröcsögös features a similar stone stele, which was recorded as being isolated between the Baden graves – whereas stele and cemetery were later superposed by a Pit Grave kurgan. This stele was probably set to mark the whole burial place (Kalicz 1999).

Finally, in northern Serbia there are two conspicuous mounds; on the Aradjanska hill of Mokrin a cremation burial was placed on a natural height and further headed up to a mound of about 50m in diameter (Girić 1987). In Skorenovac, thirteen inhumations of the latest Baden period were also covered by a mound (Garašanin 1958, p. 39 *sq.*). These sites reflect influences of the Pit Grave Culture from the east and provide the earliest examples of burial mounds in the Vojvodina.

CONCLUSION

In the Carpathian Basin, from the late Middle Copper Age onwards, the rise in the practice of cremation and the placement of graves near to or actually level with the ground surface, led to the development of above ground burial structures and consequently to the occurrence of more permanent grave markings. In the early Baden period, this developed further into stone mounds of a few metres in size.

Although the complex burial mounds in Moravia from a certain period onwards are related to the increased presence of Proto-Boleráz and Boleráz elements, they can be traced clearly back as a Funnelbeaker element within a specific settlement chamber, which later declines in the course of increasing Baden dominance.

The classical and late Baden periods are marked by conspicuous regionalism and heterogeneous burial customs. In the Pannonian Plain, smaller-scale earth deposition or stone packing are still used, as well as stone steles for marking the graves, certain parts of a settlement or a whole necropolis. There is no solid evidence of burial mounds in the western Carpathian basin, whereas in Lower Austria substantial stone packing might suggest their limited presence. In north Transdanubia the stone settings constitute a regressive and fading element of the previous Boleráz practice.

The TRB burials in Moravia as well as the Boleráz/Cernavodă-III mounds to the south demonstrate the awareness of monumental burial mound constructions in the surrounding cultural sphere. No similar phenomena however can be attested in the western and central Baden area, where the mounds do not reach more than a few metres in extent. At the western fringe of the Baden Culture with its numerous cultural interconnections to the Funnelbeaker cultural groups, the absence of substantial grave markings becomes most remarkable.

Clear evidence of substantial burial mounds for the later Baden periods can be traced in eastern peripheral zones.

In the southeast, there are isolated burial mounds, influenced by the Pit Grave kurgans. Yet, they cannot be considered as a typical Baden feature. Only in the northern Ózd-Piliny group the local development of a roughly monumental type of burial mound in the Baden Culture can be observed. It is associated with homogeneous burial customs as well as a specific settlement policy, which demonstrates the retreat to highland zones – within a horizon, marked by the first signs of cultural dissolution over the remaining Baden territory.

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INTERPRETING THE VERTICAL DISTRIBUTION OF BRONZE AGE TUMULI IN THE CENTRAL BALKANS

Marko PORČIĆ *

ABSTRACT

The subject of this paper is the interpretation of the vertical distribution of tumuli sites in the Early and Middle Bronze Age of the western and south western parts of Serbia. The author focuses his discussion on theoretical and methodological aspects of studying the vertical distribution of burial sites. The main problem concerns the dynamic variables which stand behind what archaeologists perceive as the static vertical distribution of burial sites. The baseline model is constructed using the relative area of altitudinal zones and their population potential as frames of reference against which the randomness of the tumuli sites distribution is assessed. It was concluded that the distributions of tumuli sites in the regions of Western Serbia and the Western Morava valley can be explained by the null model which entails sedentary life style or small scale mobility, while in the region of Starovlaško-raška visija a transhumance settlement pattern seems more probable.

INTRODUCTION

The topography of Bronze Age tumuli in the Central Balkans is an issue which has been recognized as an important research subject in Serbian archaeological literature but, in spite of the impressive quantity of data gathered and systematized by M. Lazić (Lazić 1989), two questions are begging an answer: what is this data good for and what are the appropriate methods for studying it? I will focus on one particular aspect of Lazić's data – the absolute altitude of the sites with Bronze Age tumuli.

The first question can be rephrased along these lines: what is the data about the vertical distribution of burial sites relevant for in terms of the dynamics of the society which produced those sites? What does it tell us about the workings of that particular past cultural system?

The second question can also be put like this: *after* we identify what it is that we want to study by looking at the altitudes of burial sites and their frequencies at different altitudinal zones, how should we proceed with our research? In another words, what kind of methodology should we employ?

The theoretical aspect will not be elaborated with the rigor necessary to claim secure knowledge, since such an aim would require tremendous amount of work and space, exceeding the format of a conference paper. Instead, the relation between the dynamic aspects and the archaeological record will

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be put forward as tentative hypotheses – possible scenarios of what might have happened, with the sole purpose of evaluating the utility (or inefficacy) of the proposed methods to deal with the hypothetical archaeological signature they would have produced if true.

WHY AND HOW TO STUDY THE VERTICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SITES?

What does the vertical distribution of burial sites tell us? First of all, we might ask if there is some kind of pattern present in the distribution (*e.g.* are there more sites in the upper zones of a certain region, clustering at some altitudinal interval)?

In the simplest model, the relative frequency of sites in one altitudinal zone will reflect the intensity of use of that particular zone in terms of the time spent within it annually. The model should be stated as follows: the number of burial sites in an altitudinal zone is proportional to the intensity of occupation in terms of the time spent in that zone annually.

Or let us consider the different situation where the placement of burial sites is determined by some other factor, ideological or political in nature. For example, some places are more important than others: burial sites are situated in zones which are considered sacred (because of some property such as the presence of a cave, spring, forest or whatever is the focus of the ritual); burial sites are concentrated in zones which are very important for expressing group identity, as in the places of conflict with another group.

These scenarios are only a few of the many which could be conjectured. Some of them will be discussed later, but I would like to move on now to a more general level – to extract a common denominator of the problems related to making inferences on the basis of the vertical distribution of burial sites.

The puzzle revolves about making sense of an observed site distribution in terms of the decisions made by the people in the past to place the burial site in one place or another. The first question to ask would be: is there a case to answer at all? Is it possible to explain the distribution by referring to an explanation which does not involve any culturally significant decision about where to place the burial site? In other words, we wish to know whether the distribution of burial sites is random or not. One would immediately ask: random in respect to what?

First it is necessary to establish a frame of reference against which the (non) randomness of the site distribution can be evaluated. If the interest is in assessing the factors which condition the placing of burial sites, then the possible starting point should be to look at the distribution of settlement sites. The null model against which the randomness of tumuli sites distribution is to be evaluated would be the vertical distribution of settlements. The null model states that the distribution of relative frequencies for tumuli sites should closely follow the distribution of the settlement sites. What is the meaning of such a model in dynamic terms? How to interpret the eventual rejection of a null model supposing that the empirical distribution significantly differs from the theoretical?

If the tumuli sites are distributed across the vertical zones in accordance with the distribution of settlement sites, then we can interpret it as “business as usual” – necropoleis are located in the vicinity of settlements and the more settlements there are within the vertical zone, the more burial sites we would expect to find.

On the other hand, if the observed distribution of tumuli sites significantly deviates from the distribution of settlements, then it can be concluded that there was a bias in the placing of burial sites, a bias caused by some other factor (*e.g.* political or ideological) than the principle of least effort (burying people in the vicinity of settlements).

But what if there is virtually no data about settlement sites, as is the case for the Bronze Age period of the regions studied in this paper – western and south western Serbia (Arsić 2007; Garašanin, Garašanin 1958)?¹

1. There are Early Bronze Age settlement sites in the Novi Pazar area in the Starovlaško-raška visija region (Jevtić 1996) but these are too few, both in number and in the intensity of research, to be included in the analysis.

In that case it would be very useful if the distribution of burial sites could reveal something about the settlement patterns. What is the connection between the distribution of burial sites and the distribution of settlement sites? This is mainly a theoretical question. Moreover, it should be expected that the relationship between the placing of settlements and placing of burials would vary across differently organized systems. I do not know of any body of theory dealing with the aforementioned problem, so what I will offer here should be (in the lack of prior research) considered as tentative hypotheses.

In the absence of settlement data, the question is: how to formulate the null model against which a comparison can be made of the distribution of burial sites? The simplest thing to do would be to look at the size of a zone in terms of its area within a region and its “attractiveness” in terms of the agricultural and pastoral resources. Ideally, we would like to know the total population inhabiting each vertical zone but in the archaeological case this variable has to be estimated by combining the information on the area of the zone and the estimation of its subsistence potential. For the purpose of this theoretical discussion I will call this variable (to be used as a frame of reference) relative population potential. The details of estimating this variable empirically will be explicated in the methodological section of the paper.

The null model is then formulated using the relative population potential variable as a frame of reference. It is assumed in the null model that the entire region is populated by the sedentary community and that the burial site distribution would reflect the population distribution. If there are deviations from the null model, then there is some other factor which causes the burial sites to cluster in a particular vertical zone.

Several other things have to be considered, as well. For example, there are opinions that the population which inhabited the regions of western and south western Serbia in the Bronze Age had not been entirely sedentary. Almost all authors agree that it is the period characterized by an increased emphasis (the degree of the emphasis varies between different authors) on mobile pastoralism, the propositions ranging from vertical transhumance with the regular return of people to their villages (Lazić 1989), to full nomadic pastoralism (Garašanin 1977; Garašanin 1994).

What if we wanted to determine whether the groups inhabiting the region had been mobile or sedentary by studying the vertical distribution of sites? I do not think that it is possible to infer with enough certainty the mobility of the people inhabiting the region just by looking at the vertical distribution of burial sites. The best we can do is to project our data against different frames of reference (Binford 2001). One of such referential frame, for example, might involve constructing a null model based on some transhumant pattern.

Of course, we are not entirely clueless about the question of mobility and I will try to show how the inspection of the vertical distribution of sites can offer some hints and ideas about settlement patterns. It is clear now that the interpretation of the vertical distribution of burial sites is not to be taken lightly because of many ambiguities that may and often do arise. Nevertheless, in the next section I will make an effort and try to illustrate these difficulties through the analysis of concrete data.

THE DATA AND METHOD

M. Lazić organized the data on tumuli from Serbia and Montenegro by period and by region (Lazić 1989). In this paper I will analyze the vertical distribution of tumuli sites from western and south western parts of Serbia (*fig. 1*).

Lazić divided these parts of Serbia into several regions: Jadar, Pocerina, Podgorina, Podrinje, Rađevina, Starovlaško-raška visija and Western Morava valley (Lazić 1989). The first 5 regions are aggregated into a larger region which will be labelled Western Serbia, so there are three regions of roughly equal size left for the analysis: Western Serbia, Starovlaško-raška visija and the Western Morava valley (*fig. 1*).

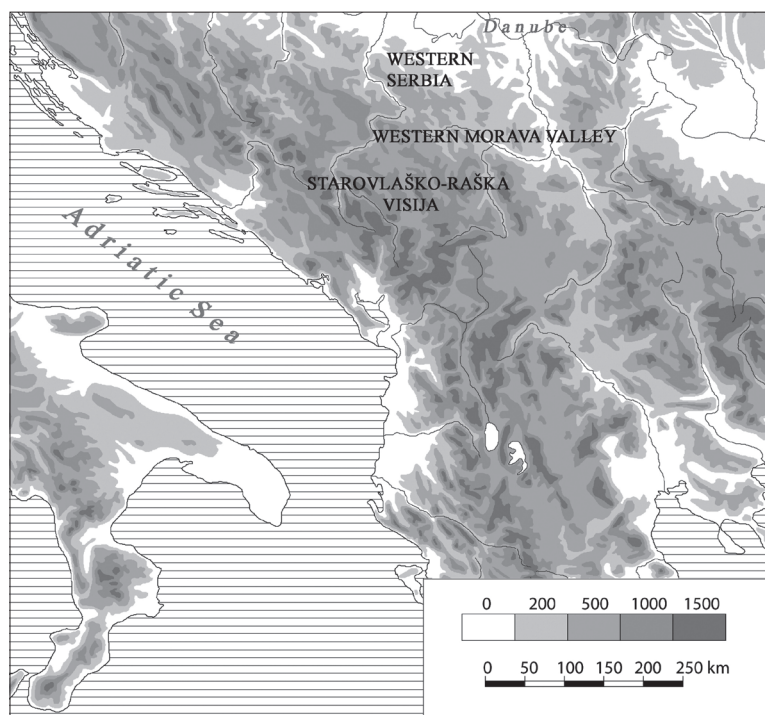


Fig. 1 – Regions of Serbia mentioned in the text.

Chronologically, these sites belong to the Early and Middle Bronze Age, encompassing a time span of about 1000 years (or probably a few centuries less), roughly from 2500-1500 B.C. judging by the dates from contemporary sites on the Pannonian plain (Forenbaher 1993). No distinction was made between these two periods (EBA and MBA) in analysis because it has been argued that there were no fundamental differences in organizational properties of the societies belonging to these periods (Bankoff 2004).

Lazić recorded the absolute altitude of each burial site at 100m intervals (*fig. 2*). I recorded his original altitudes by creating a variable with wider altitude intervals: 0-200m, 200-500m, 500-1000m and >1000m.

I had to collapse his original scale because it was necessary to make the altitude scale compatible with the scale used for measuring altitude intervals on a geographical map.

The method of testing the null model is rather straightforward. The baseline model is in effect a null hypothesis stating that the frequency of tumuli sites within a given zone is proportional to the relative population potential of that zone within a region. In order to derive the expected frequencies for each zone under the null hypothesis, it was necessary to calculate the relative areas of different zones.

In the absence of GIS I had to resort to a rather primitive method of overlaying a translucent grid over the geographic map and counting the number of squares belonging to each altitudinal zone. This way of estimating the relative areas introduces an amount of error into my calculations due to the inherent imprecision of the technique.

After estimating the relative area of each altitudinal zone within each region, the population potential could be estimated. The population potential of each zone within each region was estimated by multiplying the area of the zone by the modern population density of the zone (actually its crude estimate).² The

2. Population densities for different vertical zones were estimated in the following manner. I collected modern data on the population densities for several small towns and their immediate neighbourhood from the three regions under study (source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <http://webzrzs.statserb.sr.gov.yu>). These observations were grouped according to the vertical zones they belonged to and a mean density value was calculated for each zone. Calculated densities are: 0-200m, 82.76 pers./sq. km; 200-500m, 51.38 pers./sq. km; 500-1000m, 49.82 pers./sq. km, over 1000m, 34.4 pers./sq. km. These values were used as population density proxies in calculating the population potential of a region.

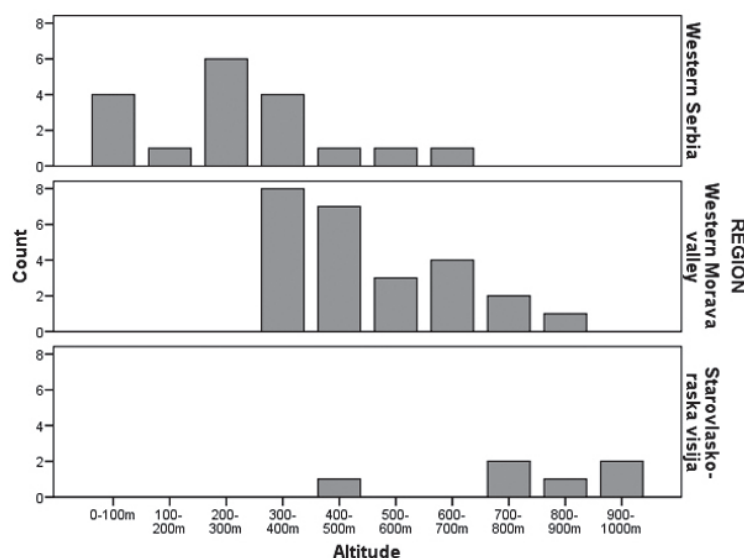


Fig. 2 – Vertical distribution of Early and Middle Bronze Age tumuli sites in the regions of interest (data source: Lazić 1989).

relative population potential of each region is then calculated as the ratio of the population potential of each zone and the sum of population potentials for each region. I have decided to call this variable population potential rather than population estimate because I am not interested in the true population number, only in the estimated relative frequencies of population across vertical zones within a region.

My assumption is that the ratios of modern population densities for different altitudinal zones will approximate the ratios of ancient population densities at least in the order of magnitude. Such approximation should hold true since the variable which stands behind population density is largely the agricultural potential of the region which in turn varies inversely with the altitude.³

The differences between population densities across altitudinal zones in the Bronze Age were probably more pronounced than today because modern technology enables more people to live in the upper zones than before. So the differences in the relative population potentials between the upper and middle zones are probably a bit underestimated in this paper.

After estimating the relative population potential of each altitudinal zone within each region, the expected frequencies for a zone were calculated by multiplying the relative population potential of a zone with the total number of sites in the region.

The statistical significance of the differences between the observed and expected frequencies was tested by the chi squared test with exact p (significance) values. The results are presented and discussed for each region separately.

Besides relying on formal hypothesis testing, additional information will be gained by looking at the distribution bar charts not only for the Early and Middle Bronze Age, but for the entire period of prehistory. Such analysis can be grounded theoretically in the long term history approach (Palavestra 1994), but it should be kept in mind that such distribution will have too much “noise” so a great deal of care should be taken in evaluating the shape of these distributions and drawing conclusions from it.

3. Using modern data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia I calculated the correlation coefficients between the altitude, population density and percent of agricultural land for 58 municipalities. The results of such an analysis indicate that there is a statistically significant, nonlinear relationship between all these variables: altitude:population density (Spearman's rho = -0.346, p<0.05), altitude:percentage of agricultural land (Spearman's rho = -0.525, p<0.001), population density:percent of agricultural land (Spearman's rho = 0.287, p<0.05).

WESTERN SERBIA

The results of the chi squared test suggest that there is no reason to reject the null model in this instance (*table 1*). Namely, the observed site frequencies for different zones do not deviate significantly from those expected under the null model.

Altitude	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
0-200m	5	8.2	-3.2
200-500m	11	6.6	4.4
500-1000m	2	3.1	-1.1
>1000m	0	0.1	-0.1

Table 1 – Observed and expected barrow site frequencies for the region of Western Serbia; ($\chi^2=4.683$, $df.=3$, exact $p=0.210$).

Such a result suggests that the null model explains the data and that there is nothing “strange” in the observed vertical distribution of tumuli. What do these results imply about the mobility of the groups?

As shown, the null model, which assumes sedentary communities, explains the data well. But as already mentioned and argued elsewhere (*e.g.* Čović 1983), the Bronze Age economy was more dependent on pastoralism and in some cases transhumance (Arnold, Greenfield 2006). However, Bronze Age transhumance was probably very limited in scale and amplitude, meaning that traversed distances were small and only a small part of the group was mobile (see Porčić 2008). If this were the case, the settlement pattern would not be different from the sedentary one, so the null model can be taken as the most parsimonious explanation for the observed data.

Looking at the long term scale, a similar picture arises (*fig. 3*). Sites tend to be concentrated in the lower zones and the general distribution from all periods roughly resembles the one from the Early and Middle Bronze Age (*fig. 2*).

WESTERN MORAVA VALLEY

The difference between the observed and expected tumuli site frequencies is not statistically significant for this region, as shown by the results of the chi squared test (*table 2*).

Altitude	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
0-200m	0	0.4	-0.4
200-500m	15	12.1	2.9
500-1000m	10	11.4	-1.4
>1000m	0	1.1	-1.1

Table 2 – Observed and expected barrow site frequencies for the region of Western Morava valley; ($\chi^2=2.321$, $df.=3$, exact $p=0.431$).

The null model seems to account very well for the data in this region as well. The situation seems similar to that of Western Serbia, only this region is a bit higher in altitude than Western Serbia. Sites tend to cluster in the lower regions.

As for Western Serbia, the general pattern which arises when the data aggregated from all periods are charted (*fig. 3*) is similar to that of the Early and Middle Bronze Age (*fig. 2*).

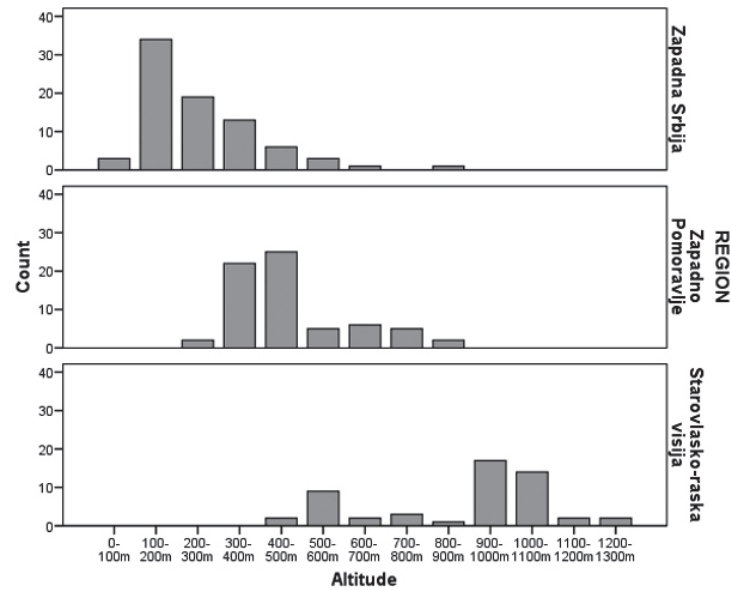


Fig. 3 – Vertical distribution of tumuli sites from all prehistoric periods (data source: Lazić 1989).

STAROVLAŠKO-RAŠKA VISIJA

The hypothesis testing procedure for this region is perhaps not entirely appropriate because of a very small sample (6 cases in total). But even with such a small sample the exact statistical significance of the differences between the observed and expected distribution is very close to the critical 0.05 level (exact $p=0.081$). Even though the chi squared statistics do not reach the (arbitrary) level of 0.05 these results (table 3) do suggest that something was happening in this region what is not in concord with the null model.

Altitude	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
0-200m	--	--	--
200-500m	1	0.3	0.7
500-1000m	5	3.1	1.9
>1000m	0	2.5	-2.5

Table 3 – Observed and expected barrow site frequencies for the region of Starovlaško-raška visija; ($\chi^2=5.071$, $df=2$, exact $p=0.081$).

If we look at the vertical distribution of tumuli sites in fig. 2 and table 3, there are two points of interest to be noticed. First of all, it is apparent that the largest residual is associated with highest zone which is completely lacking any burial sites. This can mean several things:

- there was a cultural bias not to place burial sites in the higher zones, even though they had been populated;
- there is a sampling bias towards lower zones in the discovery of sites;
- this altitudinal zone had not been populated (intensively) in the Bronze Age.

I think that the sampling bias can be ruled out. If the distribution of tumuli sites from all prehistoric periods (from the Eneolithic to the Roman era) for this region is inspected, it is evident that there are many tumuli sites in altitudinal zone higher than 1000m from later periods (fig. 3). This makes it improbable that the sampling bias is responsible for the lack of Bronze Age sites above 1000m.

In my opinion the third possibility is the most probable. The mountains in western and south western Serbia belong to the “Illyrian” vegetation province where the highest zones are occupied by forests (Janković 1984). Alpine grassland, a vegetation type developed above the forest zone, is naturally present only on the highest mountains in Serbia such as Stara planina, Kopaonik, Prokletije and Šar planina, none of which are situated in the regions under study. In general, the pasture area is rarely natural in origin.

The pastures of the highlands in Starovlaško-raška visija are not natural in origin but it must have taken some time before they were made accessible as a result of selective pressure and forest clearance. It might be for this reason that the upper boundary of tumuli sites moves above 1000m (on average) only with the beginning of the Iron Age. If that was the case the zone above 1000m should be excluded from the calculations. If this is done then the observed frequencies almost perfectly match the expected frequencies ($\chi^2=0.385$, $df=1$, exact $p=0.999$). But this is more apparent than real – a consequence of the coarse altitude scale which I used for calculations. Looking back at fig. 2 one important thing can be observed – the distribution of sites in Starovlaško-raška visija region is discontinuous, meaning that there is a substantial gap between the sites on the altitude scale. It seems that there are no sites from between 500 and 700m. In contrast, there are no such gaps in Western Serbia and Zapadno Pomoravlje.

This is something that might favour the transhumance hypothesis for the region of Starovlaško-raška visija, because if there was small scale vertical transhumance in operation with the direct residential move, we would expect just that kind of bimodal pattern to arise. Thus, for Starovlaško-raška visija we might have a reason to believe that those high altitude burial sites correspond to summer pastures.

Finally, it may be useful to look at the vertical distribution of tumuli sites for all the periods from the Eneolithic to the Roman period for the region in question. The bimodal pattern persists in the Starovlaško-raška visija region, when the cases from all periods are plotted (*fig. 3*), and the modes are shifted about 100m upwards. So, the finer grained picture which arises if the 100m interval scale is used, suggests that what we are seeing could be a reflection of some kind of vertical transhumant system. Unlike the distributions of Western Serbia and the Western Morava valley, which are mostly unimodal both when Bronze Age and aggregated data is used to generate a distribution, the distribution in the Starovlaško-raška visija region is clearly bimodal which might suggest a different settlement pattern and perhaps a more pronounced transhumant component: small-scale transhumance with the cultural emphasis on highland pastures or a seasonal settlement pattern with settlements in the upper and lower zones of the region.

THE SAMPLING BIAS

It is possible that the observed frequencies of burial sites within a zone reflect the intensity of archaeological survey and excavation within that particular zone more than anything else. I do not have the exact quantitative data to evaluate the precise impact of this bias but I would guess that this kind of bias would be directed towards the lower zones meaning that the lower zones would tend to be better investigated than higher zones of the region. The sampling bias of this sort would be present whichever null model is used.

In general, the sampling bias can influence the results in two ways. It can either obscure the existing pattern or it can enhance it but since there is no way of knowing in advance the nature of the pattern, we can never be certain, so all possible measures should be taken to remove the sampling bias (*e.g.* by use of a careful sampling design for survey projects) or to control its influence somehow (*e.g.* by estimating the intensity of research for different zones quantitatively and then correcting the calculations taking the intensity of research into account).

I do not know whether the sampling bias is serious enough to question my results but the reader must keep this possibility in mind and realize the preliminary character of the entire analysis.

CONCLUDING REMARKS ABOUT THE VERTICAL DISTRIBUTION OF BRONZE AGE TUMULI SITES IN THE CENTRAL BALKANS

It should be obvious from previous discussion that a final and unambiguous conclusion cannot be reached. But let us summarize what has been done in order to assess the weak points and possible directions for future research.

First of all we should acknowledge the fact that the data may be biased because of the unequal archaeological investigation of different zones. The analysis of the vertical distribution of sites cannot be the sole arbiter of settlement patterns. If we wanted to approach the analysis without any assumptions we could acknowledge the fact that there are more tumuli in one zone than in the other but the question remains – what does that tell us about the past cultural system? We must resort to alternative lines of evidence.

In the case of the Central Balkans, I am more inclined to concur with Lazić (Lazić 1989) that low scale transhumant movements were present in the Bronze Age with the regular return of people to the villages (probably only a small part of the population participated in these movements). The faunal evidence seems to support such a kind of subsistence pattern (Arnold, Greenfield 2006). The settlement pattern would then basically resemble the transhumance model.

What about the burial pattern? It could perhaps be argued that if the distance from the place of death to the formal burial ground of the community is not great, then the decision where to bury the deceased should depend only on cultural rules and social environment. If there was no preference for any particular location, the deceased would be buried where he had died and the burial pattern would approximate the settlement pattern in the long term. But since death and burial are both very important events in the social and symbolic sphere they will often be manipulated by the society, *e.g.* as territorial markers and as part of the cultural landscape (Palavestra 1995; Palavestra, Babić 2003).

So where are we after this theoretical and methodological exercise? For Western Serbia and the Western Morava Valley, it was found that the null model fits the data. Even though scenarios different from the null model could be conjectured, the null model seems to be the most parsimonious. The interpretation of the null model would be that there was no bias in placing the burial sites, the only determinant being the agricultural potential. It should be noted that it is all about how we decide to interpret the null model. In the lack of other lines of evidence, this interpretation still remains subjective. What is objective is whether or not the data fit the model.

In the case of Starovlaško-raška visija things remain uncertain. Both the fit of the model and its interpretation are in question. In this particular instance, I did little more than speculate on the dynamics behind the shape of the distribution of tumuli sites. This is partially true for Western Serbia and the Western Morava Valley, where the null model seems to fit, but the above mentioned problems still remain.

For of all these reasons any explanation I might offer for the vertical distribution of barrows would be highly conjectural. Not to mention the fact that in order to test different models one needs a fine grained scale of altitude which can be adapted to the demands of the model (*e.g.* the relevant scale for the model includes the intervals which are 250m wide, while our altitude variable is expressed in 500m intervals).

I hope that I was successful in at least one thing – showing that the vertical distribution of burial sites needs to be considered very carefully in terms of what it reflects.

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TUMULUS OR CAIRN? THE CASE OF THE CENTRAL DALMATIAN ISLANDS

Vedran BARBARIĆ*

ABSTRACT

Morphological features in the landscape of Dalmatia, the coastal region of Croatia, have been conducive to correct identification due to the fact that stone burial mounds are very hard to distinguish within the landscape from the cairns created through agricultural activities. To date, some of the stone mounds excavated contained Bronze Age burials but very often those excavated contained no traces of burial rites whatsoever.

The landscape of the Central Dalmatian Islands is covered with these monuments and it is crucial to find a way to distinguish them in order to be able to use the data in related spatial analyses.

Despite the lack of excavations, the relatively good existing data on spatial distribution, as well as the current condition of these monuments, offer an opportunity for their reclassification. Advances made in this manner can allow progress in our knowledge of the relationships between these monuments, communities, settlements and their territories during the Bronze Age period in Dalmatia.

Within the study of the BA period in Dalmatia, the coastal region of Croatia, interest in the burial mounds has always had a special place. As they are the most commonly found Bronze Age monuments within the landscape, they always draw the attention of scholars. Unlike tumuli from other areas, which are constructed mainly of soil, in Dalmatia they are composed of loose stones. Apart from just being constructed out of the most easily available material, in this case limestone, they are also the by-product of the continuous process of soil loss.¹ Their existence is, therefore, inevitable, whether just as heaps of cleared stone thrown on the borders of cultivated plots of land, as monuments to the dead or as some other mark of social importance for the communities that constructed them.

During the Bronze Age in Central Dalmatia, a variety of burial rites have been archaeologically confirmed. We have data on cave inhumation and incineration burials, and on incineration and inhumation within the stone tumuli.² Burying the dead under stone tumuli was definitely the most prominent and most widely spread burial custom to have been identified so far. The beginning of this custom in Central Dalmatia is recorded during Br A1, within the Cetina group area on the mainland.³ According to the rites recorded, the deceased is laid out in the crouched position into a cist made out of stone slabs. Burials of parts of the body of the deceased are recorded too. Grave offerings are sometimes present but this does not represent

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1. Chapman *et al.* 1996, p. 115-116, 261.

2. Marović 1999.

3. Marović, Čović 1983, p. 197; within this group both incineration and inhumation are recorded under the tumuli. Biritualism of this kind is not recorded on the Islands.

the rule. The cist is covered with a large amount of stones. Some form of inner elaborate construction, *i.e.* burial chamber, has not been recorded. Cairns formed in this way can vary in size between 4 and 40 metres in diameter. Traces of some outer construction are sometimes present, like the revetment or circle of vertically inserted slabs on the edge of the cairn.

According to general opinion, tumuli on the Central Dalmatian islands do not show the characteristics of contemporary Cetina culture tumuli found on the mainland of Central Dalmatia.⁴ As a consequence of the lack of excavation, they are not yet assigned to any wider cultural phenomenon.

By the beginning of the Iron Age, tumulus burials in Central Dalmatia seem to disappear in favour of flat-grave burials.⁵ One Iron Age burial beneath a tumulus is recorded on the Central Dalmatian Islands.⁶ It is dated to the Early Iron Age, and may represent an example of some kind of a link towards the flat-grave burials. It is also important to stress that the flat graves are also very poorly documented in the area of our interest.

So far, the distribution, position and construction of tumuli in Dalmatia have not been studied in detail. The main reason for this was the absence of any systematic approach. Further significant problems arise when we take into consideration the nature of the landscape on the coastline and islands of Central Dalmatia. It is dominantly marked with the terracing walls, division walls and the vast number of cairns, all of these made using a very simple dry stone technique. The majority of these features are products of a variety of agricultural activities.

The field projects, Neothermal Dalmatia Project and Adriatic Islands Project, have shown that the first significant interventions in the landscape of Central and Northern Dalmatia occurred at the end of the Copper Age and the beginning of the Bronze Age period.⁷ Climatic changes at the end of the Copper Age produced change in the value of the different land types for agriculture and pasture. A shift in agricultural interest in favour of the land on the hill slopes provoked an evolution in land management, and resulted in the emergence of some new landscape features. The process of terracing on hill slopes was one solution to the new problem of exceptionally intensive erosion. At the same time, the cultivation of the stony soils produced large quantities of stone. These were either used for building various dry stone structures or were dumped on the borders of agricultural areas, therefore forming simple cairns. In contrast other cairns were formed deliberately to hold a burial.⁸

The last major activities in the landscape of this region took place at the end of the 19th c. Due to large stress on the wine making industry in Europe, namely the epidemic affecting the vineyards of France and Italy, Dalmatia suddenly became one of the main suppliers of wine for western Europe. This provoked massive planting of new vineyards and changed the landscape of Central Dalmatia dramatically.⁹ Cairns resulting from massive land clearance were made during this time and most of the older structures were removed or buried under the large new drystone structures.¹⁰ This had a great impact on the remains of the Late Copper Age and Bronze Age landscape. Without doubt, some monuments were destroyed or buried under new structures during this process, while the others were all of a sudden surrounded with numerous features, which were very similar in shape and construction, but much younger in date (*fig. 2*).

Very few archaeological excavations of cairns have been performed on the islands so far. Out of the 672 recorded cairns on the islands of Brač, Hvar, Šolta, Vis and the southern part of the Makarska region on the mainland, only 29 have been excavated by archaeologists from the end of the 19th c. onwards and very few of these in the last 50 years (*fig. 1*). These excavations were not always fruitful, as some of the cairns contained no burials. In the literature these were very often treated as “cenotaphs”, along with the prevailing opinion that all of the cairns represented burial monuments, but without any firm evidence in that direction.¹¹

4. Marović 1985, p. 32; Čović 1983a, p. 161.

5. Čović 1983b, p. 820.

6. Gaffney 1992, p. 165.

7. Chapman *et al.* 1996, p. 260-261; 283-285.

8. Chapman *et al.* 1996, p. 115-116.

9. Stančić *et al.* 1999, p. 9.

10. Kirigin *et al.* 2006, p. 167; Stančić *et al.* 1999, p. 25; Gaffney *et al.* 1997, p. 34.

11. Gaffney 1992, p. 138; Marović 1976, p. 60; Gaffney *et al.* 2002, p. 35.

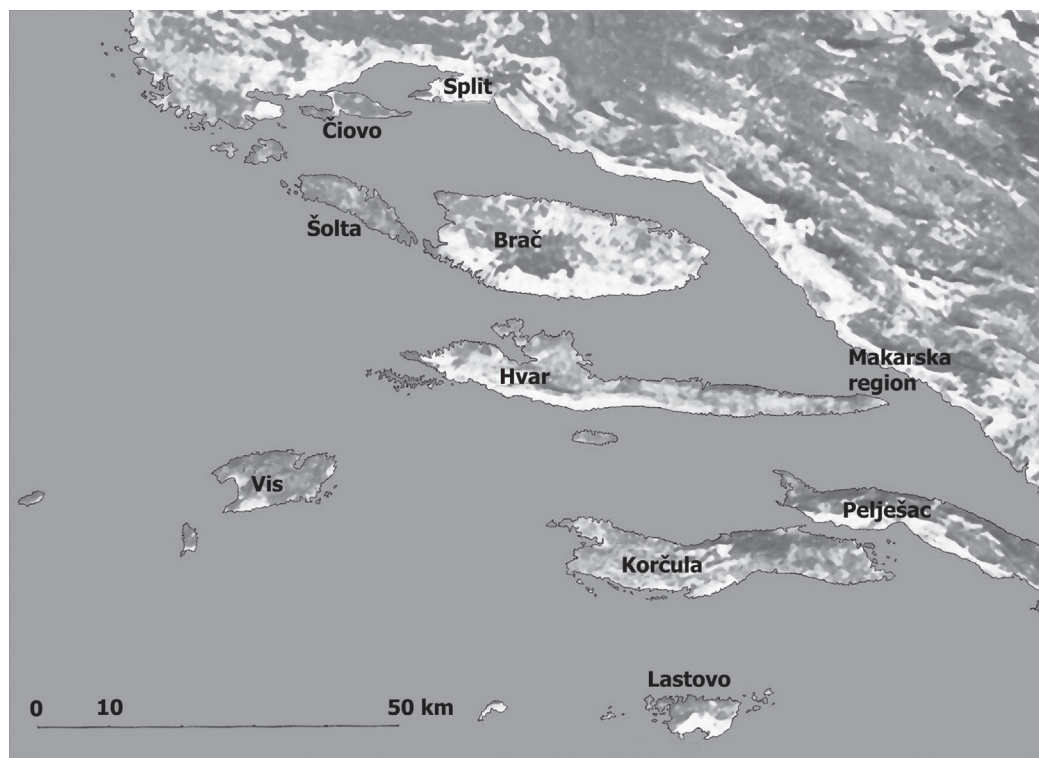


Fig. 1 – Map of Central Dalmatia, Croatia.

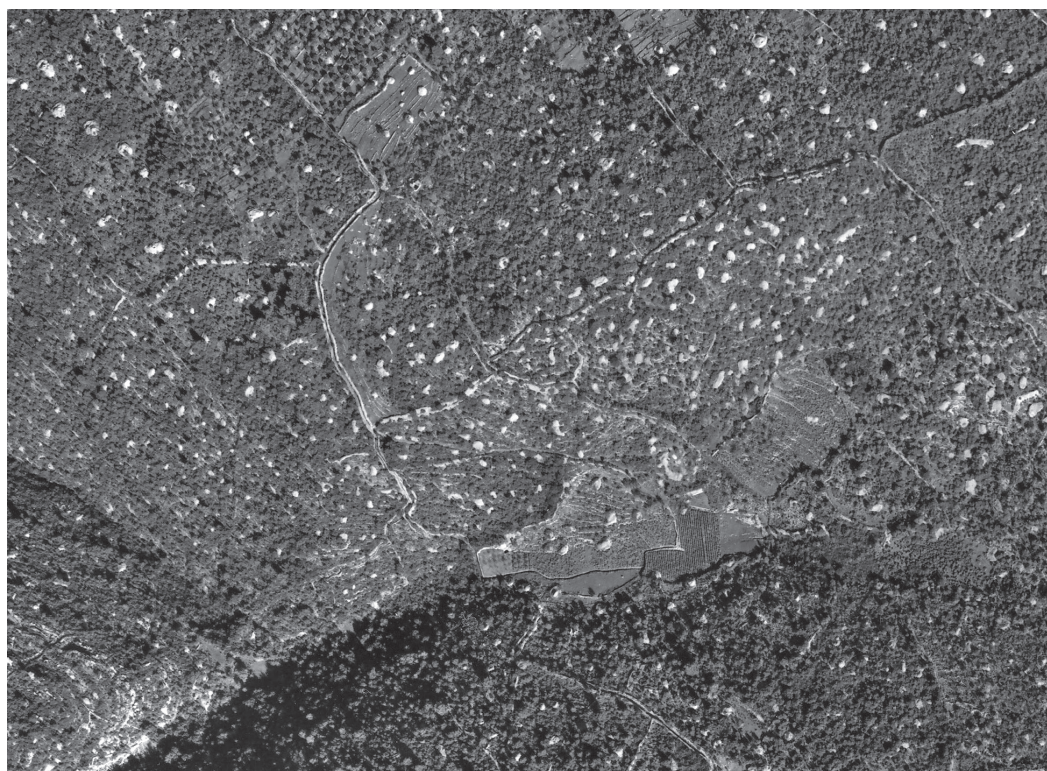


Fig. 2 – Aerial view of part of the surveyed area.

Some authors were considering cairns from the mainland neighbouring area in the wider, landscape-oriented perspective.¹² In this way, some of the cairns located at various strategic positions were concluded to be markers of territorial boundaries.

In the late 1980's, the results of the Neothermal Dalmatia Project have shown that the majority of cairns in the Northern Dalmatia should primarily be considered the results of stone clearance. It is thought that some of these had had a secondary use for burial purposes, suggesting that the agriculture, soil loss and ancestral cult activities were unified in some way.¹³

These conclusions can easily be employed in Central Dalmatia, as they were drawn from a landscape with the same characteristics.

In the 1990's, the Adriatic Islands Project collected data about all of the visible and known sites and monuments on the Central Dalmatian islands. The database that was thereby created provided the raw data for this study. Much information can be gained if we take into consideration some of the values that have not been used before. Some of the basic data in this direction would be:

- on the islands of Brač, Hvar, Šolta, Vis, and in the Makarska region on the mainland, 672 cairns have been recorded (*table 1*);
- out of these, 166 cairns contained burials. For the majority of these the only evidence was the existence of stone slabs. These were parts of the cists that once contained burials that were destroyed at an unknown date. These data have not been used so far;
- many cairns had been excavated by grave robbers at some point in time. Cairns that were badly damaged or excavated, and contained no traces of burial cists at the time they were recorded, could be assigned a value of *not-tumulus* for the statistical purposes. Others that have not been badly damaged are treated as non excavated (*table 2*).

Brač	Hvar	Šolta	Makarska region	Vis	Total
242	242	88	88	12	672

Table 1 – Number of cairns recorded on the Central Dalmatian Islands

	Contains grave	Multiple graves	Without grave	Unexcavated	No data
Brač	59	10	65	97	11
Hvar	44	3	51	128	16
Šolta	9	0	21	56	2
Makarska region	19	0	25	38	6
Vis	2	1	3	6	0
Total	133	14	165	325	35
	20%	2%	25%	48%	5%

Table 2 – Existence of graves within all of the known cairns on the Central Dalmatian Islands.

Furthermore, values have been assigned to the recorded characteristics of the cairns:

- position in the landscape;
- position on the different soil classes;
- size of the cairn;
- size of the stones used in construction;
- position within the groups of cairns;
- presence of some kind of outer construction;
- presence of pottery on the surface.

12. Babić 1984, p. 38-39.

13. Gaffney *et al.* 2002, p. 35-36.

By using these values in statistical analyses some patterns have appeared that could be of significance. These were compared with some of the current theories about tumuli and cairns in the area.

The greatest proportion of cairns is situated on the karst – 46% (*table 3*). Since the eroded karst represents the largest portion of all soils on the islands, this is not surprising. But we have to keep in mind the fact that the vast majority of the present karst area was stony land during the BA that eroded through time. In this way we come to the conclusion that these cairns are in fact positioned exactly at the sites of the most intensive BA agricultural activities.

Two of the islands do not seem to fit in this picture, the islands of Šolta and Vis. On the Island of Šolta some different patterns emerged out of the collected data. The majority of cairns on Šolta (73%) are situated on terraces. Since all the cairns on Šolta that had fragments of Roman pottery at the surface are situated on terraces (21 of 64), it is possible that our sample is contaminated with cairns that were created during the Roman period. A relatively large proportion of the cairns being on terraces is also noticeable on the Island of Hvar. They are of a different origin from the ones on Šolta, being without significant evidence in favour of allotting them to the Roman period. This can be confirmed by the relatively large proportion of recorded tumuli within excavated cairns from terraces (11/29). On the basis of this, it can be claimed that, on the Island of Hvar, the process of terracing during the late CA and the BA was more intensive than on the other Central Dalmatian Islands.

On the other hand, the island of Vis shows a completely different pattern. Although this island is almost twice the size of Šolta, only 12 cairns and/or tumuli are known. The reason for this has not yet been revealed.

	Karst	Stony soils	Terraces	Arable	No data
Brač	146	85	1	10	0
Hvar	130	0	61	18	34
Šolta	4	1	64	18	1
Makarska region	26	48	9	4	1
Vis	0	9	1	1	1
Total	306	142	136	51	37

Table 3 – Number of cairns on different soil classes.

According to the criteria mentioned above, only part of all excavated and/or destroyed cairns can be identified as tumuli (*table 4*). In the search for the characteristics which may be significant for their identification, a few interesting facts appeared.

	Brač	Hvar	Šolta	Makarska region	Vis
Tumuli/excavated cairns	51%	48%	30%	43%	50%
Tumuli/excavated cairns on karst	61%	50%	0%	67%	0%

Table 4 – Percentage of tumuli within all excavated cairns.

The greatest percentage of burials in cairns on all soil classes occurs just within the eroded karst (*table 4*). Due to the reasons cited above, this fact speaks in favour of the a link between soil loss, stone clearance and ancestral cult. Nevertheless, we have to be careful with the interpretation of the CA and BA clearance cairns as tumuli, as has already been emphasized.¹⁴ Very few graves (2 cases on Hvar and 1 in the Makarska region) have been recorded within the cairns that consisted of small size stones, which are most frequently the by-product of land clearance. This also points to the danger of confusing more recent cairns

14. Gaffney *et al.* 2002, p. 35.

with the CA and BA ones. What assures us that the recording in the field is done the right way is the fact that on Hvar, where most of these cairns have been recorded, the majority (70%) is on the slopes on eroded karst (*table 5*). As already mentioned, this could have easily been the agricultural area during the BA, stony soils that degraded into the karst through erosion.

Arable	Stony	Karst	Terrace
13%	0%	70%	17%

Table 5 – Cairns composed out of small sized stones – percentage on different soil classes on Hvar.

One morphological feature of the cairns that has been recorded but not clarified as yet is the presence of some form of outer construction. Mostly it consists of stones inserted vertically close to the rim of the cairn. No significant explanations of this have been offered in the literature so far. The analyses have shown that the existence of such construction on the cairn does not imply that the grave exists within the cairn. Out of a total of 24 such cairns, 7 of 11 excavated ones contained a grave.

The same can be said in regard to the presence of fragments of prehistoric pottery on the surface of the cairns. This has been treated so far as a sign of some kind of funeral feast.¹⁵ 55 of these were recorded, and 9 out of the 27 excavated contained graves. So, it is better to state that although these fragments show possible traces of ritual activities, it is anything but correct to treat these exclusively as traces of funeral feasts.

The size of the cairns was very often related to the supposed importance of the person buried within it. Once again, this conclusion was made only on the basis of the personal impression of the author, without any results of excavation to support it. This assumption included the premise that all, or at least the majority, of cairns were considered to be tumuli. It is, however, interesting to note that the cairns with more than 20m diameters contain a considerably smaller percentage of burials than the smallest cairns, with a diameter of less than 10 metres (*table 6*). Unfortunately, the smaller cairns today are in the worst condition of all. It seems that their smaller size has made them easier for plundering (*table 7*).

<10m	10-20m	>20m
55%	38%	31%

Table 6 – Percentage of burials within excavated cairns of different size classes.

Excavated: not tumulus	Excavated: Tumulus	Not excavated	No data
29%	35%	33%	3%

Table 7 – Cairns of size less than 10m in diameter.

Groups of cairns recorded on the Islands of Central Dalmatia have been treated so far as “tumuli cemeteries”. This is an assumption that has not been questioned so far. These groups usually consist of between 3 and 22 cairns. The average number of cairns in groups on Brač and in the Makarska region is 6, while on the islands of Hvar and Šolta it is 9. The cairns can vary in size. A significant proportion within groups on Brač and in the Makarska region hold small size cairns, while their proportion within groups on Hvar and Šolta is almost insignificant. Generally, looking at the studied sample, it can be said that on Brač and in the Makarska region these groups are much more consistent in their characteristics, while on Hvar and Šolta they tend to vary much more in number and size. When we look at the data on the proportion of tumuli within excavated cairns in groups, the difference between mentioned areas becomes even more visible (*table 8*).

15. Marović 1976, p. 62, 69.

	No. of excavated cairns within groups	No. of tumuli within groups	Tumuli/excavated cairns within groups
Brač	61	35	57%
Hvar	18	5	28%
Makarska region	18	11	61%
Šolta	22	8	36%

Table 8 – Groups of cairns – tumuli within groups. There are no groups of cairns on the Island of Vis.

It is clear from this data that the “tumuli cemetery” theory has to be approached with a great deal of caution. This is true of the areas with greater proportion of tumuli, while the other half of the sample is obviously influenced by other factors. The reasons for different patterns on Šolta and Hvar should be sought within the abovementioned facts concerning Roman evidence on Šolta and intensive terracing activities on Hvar. It is, therefore, possible that some of the cairns have been formed through later agricultural activities, while others increased in size through the same process.

It is certain that the methodology of this study has some limitations. An attempt was made to overcome these by carefully studying data and identifying potential biases. Nevertheless, some caution should be made while using these results for further studies. Some results undoubtedly cast a new light on this body of archaeological data, testing some old premises and raising some new questions. Hopefully, these may be resolved in the future by combining excavation with remote sensing activities.

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LA SCOPERTA DELLA SEPOLTURA A TUMULO DI BARBARIGA (ISTRIA, CROAZIA)

NOVITÀ E RISCONTRI IN RELAZIONE AI TUMULI DELL'ETÀ DEL BRONZO RINVENUTI NELLA PENISOLA ISTRIANA E NELL'ITALIA NORD-ORIENTALE

THE DISCOVERY OF THE BURIAL MOUND AT BARBARIGA (ISTRIA, CROATIA). COMPARISON TO BRONZE AGE TUMULI IN THE ISTRIAN PENINSULA AND NORTHEAST ITALY

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RIASSUNTO

Il tumulo funerario di Barbariga-Baia di Maricchio (Istria, Repubblica di Croazia) è stato scoperto nell'anno 2003 durante una ricognizione di superficie quale operazione preventiva all'inizio dei lavori inerenti alla costruzione di un campo da golf. Subito dopo la sua scoperta, è stato oggetto di uno scavo di recupero della durata complessiva di quasi due mesi. Anche se il tumulo al momento del suo rinvenimento si presentava in condizioni precarie, è stato possibile confermare l'esistenza di un muro a secco di forma circolare, del diametro di circa 15m e dell'altezza massima di 45cm, al centro del quale si trovava la tomba. La tomba era orientata in direzione NO/SE. Questa, costruita con la tecnica del muro a secco, aveva una lunghezza di 147cm, un'altezza di 50cm e una larghezza di 75cm. Si suppone che il defunto vi sia stato deposto in posizione contratta. Purtroppo, abbiamo notato che la tomba è stata saccheggiata nell'antichità e all'interno di essa non sono stati rinvenuti resti umani. Durante le indagini sono emersi dei frammenti ceramici databili al Bronzo Antico. Analogamente ad altri tumuli funerari istriani, quello di Barbariga si trovava in una posizione accuratamente scelta, ovvero sulla sommità della collina oggi detta Comunale, che sovrasta la Baia di Maricchio. I tumuli funerari rappresentano i resti più antichi inerenti all'età del bronzo in Istria. Lo scavo del tumulo funerario di Barbariga ha permesso di constatare l'esistenza di caratteristiche comuni ad altri tumuli istriani ed alcuni tumuli situati più a nord, quali quelli friulani. D'altra parte, è stato possibile notare delle novità fornite dalla presenza di reperti fittili che sembrano rimandare a dei contatti con la zona dalmata.

ABSTRACT

The burial mound of Barbariga-Baia di Maricchio (Istria, Republic of Croatia) was discovered in 2003 during an archaeological survey carried out before the creation of a golf course. Immediately after its discovery, a rescue excavation of the burial mound was carried out over nearly two months. Although at the moment of discovery the tumulus was in a precarious state, the existence was confirmed of a circular dry-stone wall, 15m in diameter and having a maximum height of 45cm, with the grave at its centre. The grave is oriented east-west, was constructed of dry stone, and measured 147cm long, 75cm wide and 50cm deep. It is presumed that the deceased was placed in a contracted position. Unfortunately, the grave was pillaged in Antiquity and no

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human remains survive. During the investigation, fragments of pottery datable to the Early Bronze Age were found. Like other burial mounds in Istria, that of Barbariga is located in a carefully chosen spot, at the top of the hill called Comunal, which overlooks the bay of Maricchio. The burial mounds represent the most ancient vestiges of the Bronze Age in Istria. The excavation of the mound at Barbariga has enabled comparison of similar features with other tumuli in Istria and certain tumuli located farther north, those of Friuli. On the other hand, new elements provided by the presence of finds in clay appear to indicate contact with the Dalmatian zone.

Fino a poco tempo fa i tumuli rappresentavano le sepolture più antiche presenti sul territorio istriano.¹

Le prime ricerche che hanno avuto per oggetto di scavo queste strutture risalenti all'età del bronzo si datano alla fine del XIX secolo, quando nel lontano novembre del 1893 ne furono indagate nove, nei dintorni dell'odierna città di Valle, nell'Istria sud-occidentale.² Cinque anni più tardi, nel 1898, fu C. Marchesetti a compiere delle ricerche sul tumulo situato in cima al Monte Gomilla, sulla penisola di Promontore, nell'Istria meridionale.³

Le indagini archeologiche continuarono a più riprese a cavallo tra i secoli XIX e XX, nonché agli inizi del '900, quando in Istria operava Anton Gnirs, allora conservatore e curatore dei Monumenti Storici,⁴ per giungere ad una sosta all'epoca della Seconda Guerra Mondiale. Le ricerche furono riprese all'inizio degli anni '50 del secolo scorso da parte dell'archeologo Boris Bačić e di altri studiosi eminenti, ai quali dobbiamo oggi diverse informazioni inerenti ai tumuli da loro indagati.⁵

Il tumulo di Barbariga, scoperto casualmente durante una ricognizione di superficie effettuata nel mese di giugno del 2003 come azione urgente e preventiva ai lavori di costruzione di un campo da golf⁶ (*fig. 1*), era dislocato su una collina denominata Comunal, sovrastante la Baia di Maricchio, in prossimità del centro abitato di Barbariga, a circa due chilometri di distanza dal castelliere di



Fig. 1 – Mappa di distribuzione dei tumuli istriani scavati menzionati nel testo.

1. Komšo 2008, p. 257-261.
2. *AMSIAS* 1894, p. 497-499. A dirigere le ricerche fu la Direzione della Società istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria che rivelò che sei tra i nove tumuli indagati contenevano una tomba a cista costruita da lastre in calcare, ovvero “tombe rettangolari ad inumazione” situate, tranne in un caso, al centro stesso del tumulo. In base a quanto riferirono i ricercatori, tutte le tombe erano posizionate in direzione nord-sud. Vista la dimensione ridotta di queste ultime, nonché la posizione dei resti umani al loro interno, supposero che i cadaveri fossero rinchiusi “accoccolati o seduti” con le ginocchia flesse.
3. Marchesetti 1903 (ristampa 1981), p. 104. Il Marchesetti menziona ancora altri tumuli situati in prossimità di quello da lui indagato che sembrano esser stati esclusi dalle ricerche. A parte il dato pertinente alle dimensioni enormi del tumulo, lo studioso riferisce di aver rinvenuto al centro la caratteristica tomba costituita da lastre in calcare nonché alcune ossa appartenenti al defunto; Schiavuzzi 1908, p. 161.
4. Marchesetti 1903 (ristampa 1981), p. 104; Schwalb 1905, p. 123; Schiavuzzi 1908, p. 91-172; Schiavuzzi 1914, p. 209-213; Gnirs 1925, p. 13, 37-43, 106-109; Gnirs 1906, p. 300-307; Battaglia 1926, p. 31-79; Ruaro Loseri 1983, p. 128-130; Bekić 2002, p. 5-60.
5. Bačić 1961, p. 15-23; Bačić 1973, p. 7-23; Bačić 1960, p. 197-210; Mihovilić 1989, p. 73; Hänsel *et al.* 2008, p. 17-24.
6. La ricognizione fu effettuata da parte dei curatori del Museo archeologico dell'Istria Željko Ujčić e Giulia Codacci-Terlević: Codacci-Terlević 2007, p. 11-12.



Fig. 2 – Il tumulo di Barbariga al momento della sua scoperta. Foto: G. Codacci-Terlević.

Mandriol, datato all'età del bronzo e all'antica età del ferro.⁷ Trattandosi di uno scavo di emergenza, le indagini iniziarono il giorno successivo alla sua scoperta. Il tumulo risultava essere praticamente irriconoscibile; mancava del tutto il caratteristico cumulo di pietre che in origine doveva coprire la sepoltura. Al suo posto era possibile notare un lieve rialzo del terreno di forma circolare al di sopra del piano di calpestio (fig. 2). Lo scavo è iniziato nel quadrante nordorientale ed è stato successivamente ampliato a tutta la struttura.⁸ Lo strato superficiale è risultato essere dello spessore di circa 15cm ed era costituito da humus e da pietrisco. Durante le indagini, nel tratto settentrionale emersero alcuni blocchi in calcare sbozzati. Questi poggiavano su di uno strato sterile di terra rossa, che ricopriva la roccia del substrato. Già in questa porzione aperta, era possibile constatare che i blocchi di calcare avevano andamento semicircolare regolare e marcavano così il perimetro del tumulo originario. Durante le indagini, abbiamo notato che questi blocchi formavano un muro a secco di forma circolare che interessava tutta l'area indagata sotto la superficie (fig. 3, 4). Il muretto si era conservato maggiormente nella sua porzione nordorientale, dove abbiamo riscontrato l'esistenza di cinque file di conci formanti un muro a secco dell'altezza di circa 0,50m. Il diametro di questa struttura circolare era di circa 15m. Al suo interno abbiamo riscontrato un riempimento composto da terra di colore bruno e da blocchi in pietra delle stesse dimensioni o un po' più grandi di quelli facenti parte del muro circolare esterno, nonché di pietre di dimensioni più piccole.

In alcuni segmenti, precisamente nella parte nordorientale e sudoccidentale, è stato possibile notare un'ulteriore fila di conci disposti a cerchio, paralleli alla struttura circolare esterna. Si tratterebbe di un muro a secco meno conservato e di andamento meno regolare rispetto al primo, disposto a distanza variabile da quest'ultimo. È difficile dire con certezza quale fosse l'altezza originaria di questa struttura. Molto probabilmente si tratta dei resti di un recinto di forma circolare forse originariamente non molto più alto di quanto si presenta oggi, all'interno del quale si svolgevano le pratiche rituali connesse all'innalzamento della sepoltura prima della copertura completa col cumulo di pietre.⁹

7. Marchesetti 1903 (e ristampa del 1981), p. 102; Schiavuzzi 1908, p. 101; Buršić-Matjašić 2000.

8. Le ricerche sono state condotte sotto la direzione di G. Codacci-Terlević del Museo archeologico dell'Istria. Sono iniziate precisamente il giorno 1 luglio del 2003 e si sono concluse il 16 ottobre dello stesso anno. Nel periodo dal 9 al 16 di ottobre sono state portate a termine da parte dei colleghi dr.sc. Kristina Mihovilić e Darko Komšo, curatori presso il Museo archeologico dell'Istria, ai quali sono particolarmente grata.

9. Codacci-Terlević 2006, p. 41-74; fig. 3, 4, 5.



Fig. 3 – Recinto esterno del tumulo costituito da un muro a secco di forma circolare. Quadrante nord-orientale.
Foto: G. Codacci-Terlević.



Fig. 4 – Doppio filare di pietre, parte del recinto esterno del tumulo. Quadrante sud-occidentale.
Foto: K. Mihovilić.

Al pari di altri tumuli in Istria e nell'Italia nordorientale,¹⁰ abbiamo riscontrato la presenza di frammenti ceramici negli spazi presenti tra i blocchi di dimensioni più grandi o sulla superficie di questi. Alcuni materiali in ceramica sono stati rinvenuti pure in prossimità della parte esterna del muro a secco; più precisamente lungo i settori nordorientale, sudorientale e sudoccidentale. In quest'ultimo settore, nello spazio compreso tra il muro esterno e quello interno, sono stati raccolti alcuni frammenti ceramici, tra i quali se ne distinguono alcuni con decorazioni. È necessario dire che si tratta di un numero esiguo di reperti ceramici, la maggior parte dei quali caratterizzata da un elevato stato di frammentarietà. A causa delle difficoltà determinate dallo stato di conservazione dei reperti e dei contesti, mi sono concentrata sull'analisi tipologica. Tra i reperti fittili ne sono riconoscibili alcuni che corrispondono a forme locali, quali frammenti di orli appartenenti a scodelle con orlo obliquo appiattito ed espanso senza decorazioni¹¹ o frammenti di vasellame con decorazioni plastiche a bottone e frammenti che presentano un listello o cordone assottigliato al di sotto dell'orlo, già riscontrati in un sito in grotta ed in un altro tumulo indagato dal Bačić, databili al Bronzo Antico, nonché concordanti con il materiale ceramico rinvenuto sul castelliere di Monte Orcino (Vrčin).¹² Sono stati pure rinvenuti alcuni frammenti di fondi a tacco che sono confrontabili con recipienti trovati nel tumulo di Grande Grumazzo (Vela Gromača) ed alcuni orli espansi con collo cilindrico, che trovano analogie in reperti di sicura collocazione stratigrafica nello scavo effettuato dal Bačić nella grotta di Trogrla.¹³ Tra queste forme locali, rientrano alcuni orli di scodelle a tesa interna, senza decorazioni, che palesemente concordano con il materiale proveniente dai summenzionati siti istriani nonché con scodelle caratteristiche della seconda fase della Cultura di Cetina rinvenute in diversi tumuli dell'età del

10. Vitri 1983, p. 84-86; Borgna, Cássola Guida 2007, p. 191-201, cf. p. 196.

11. Codacci-Terlević 2006, tav. 2.; Bačić 1956, p. 323-348; Bačić 1976-1978, p. 161-172; tav. 3, 3; Čović 1983, p. 114-132.

12. Codacci-Terlević 2006, tav. 1; Čović 1983, tav. 13, 7; Buršić-Matjašić 1989, p. 475-494; Govedarica 1989, p. 71-80, tav. 15, 6.

13. Bačić 1973, p. 7-23, tav. 6, 1, 2, 3; Bačić 1976-1978, tav. 3, 3.

bronzo presenti in territorio dalmata.¹⁴ Manca del tutto la caratteristica ceramica di colore rossastro con la superficie esterna decorata “a striature” che viene attribuita alla fase finale dell’età del rame ed alla fase iniziale dell’età del bronzo in Istria.¹⁵

Oltre a questi, si distinguono alcuni frammenti che appartengono a forme ceramiche caratteristiche della Cultura di Cetina, originaria dell’entroterra dalmato, le cui sepolture sotto tumulo sono state indagate e pubblicate da I. Marović.¹⁶ Tra questi, vi sono parti di scodelle, come il caratteristico frammento di orlo ingrossato ed introflesso decorato all’estremità da linee incise formanti un motivo a “V” e all’esterno da due linee parallele, attribuibile ad una scodella tronconica a profilo convesso, caratteristica della seconda fase della cultura di Cetina per la decorazione costante all’estremità superiore e all’esterno;¹⁷ frammenti di orlo a breve tesa obliqua attribuibili a coppe con una caratteristica linea incisa subito al di sotto dell’orlo e munite delle tipiche anse “ad X” che si estendono dall’orlo alla spalla del vaso. Le coppe presentano prevalentemente corpo sferico o cilindrico.¹⁸ Il tumulo di Barbariga ha restituito inoltre alcuni frammenti attribuibili a recipienti della stessa forma, tra i quali uno decorato con linee parallele incise al di sotto delle quali si ha una fila di puntini impressi e linee incise a zig-zag ed alcuni frammenti di fondi a tacco nettamente distinti dalla parete, con la caratteristica linea incisa sul lato esterno. La linea incisa è presente anche sul fondo. Si tratta delle caratteristiche scodelle della Cultura di Cetina.¹⁹ Frammenti attribuibili a coppe tipo Cetina con orlo svasato provengono pure dagli scavi sistematici del castelliere di Moncodogno (Monkodonja), nell’Istria sudoccidentale. Questi sono stati accuratamente datati al Bronzo Antico. Oltre a questi, in base a quanto riferiscono i ricercatori, di particolare importanza sembra essere un frammento di orlo di recipiente di tipo Cetina con la caratteristica ansa “ad X”, decorato ad incisione e rinvenuto al di sotto delle mura nella zona centrale dell’acropoli di Moncodogno (Monkodonja). Queste anse vennero usate in un intervallo di tempo un po’ più lungo e compaiono anche in alcuni siti abitati dell’Italia settentrionale.²⁰

La presenza di reperti fittili attribuibili alla Cultura di Cetina nei siti in grotta dell’Adriatico settentrionale, precisamente in alcune caverne del Carso triestino, sembra confermare l’esistenza di tutta una serie di contatti ad ampio raggio dai quali non sembra essere stata esclusa l’Istria. Cio è confermato dai reperti provenienti dal castelliere di Moncodogno (Monkodonja) e dal tumulo di Barbariga, nonché da un reperto isolato di sicura attribuzione alla Cultura dalmata, proveniente dal sito pluristratificato di Marlera, nell’Istria meridionale, che per ora non è stato sottoposto ad indagini sistematiche. Per quel che riguarda la natura di questi contatti e per il grado di influenza che i portatori della Cultura di Cetina avrebbero esercitato sulle comunità dell’età del bronzo in Istria, possediamo troppo pochi dati, che non ci permettono di stabilire se la tipologia dei tumuli istriani (caratterizzati da un cumulo di pietre di dimensioni variabili, all’interno del quale viene custodita la tomba, costruita prevalentemente da lastre in calcare formanti una cista litica con il rito esclusivo dell’inumazione) possa essere stata introdotta nella nostra regione da parte dei portatori della Cultura di Cetina, come si suppone sia avvenuto nell’Italia meridionale.²¹

In alcune aree è stato possibile notare delle piccole concentrazioni di materiale ceramico o di resti di ossa animali e conchiglie marine, quali possibili resti di sacrifici. Oltre a questi sono stati recuperati alcuni manufatti in selce di provenienza molto probabilmente locale, tra i quali si distinguono un nucleo per lamelle, un raschiatoio laterale, un segmento di lama ed una scheggia corticale.²²

14. Codacci-Terlević 2006, tav. 2, 16; Govedarica 1989, tav. 14, 3; Bačić 1978, p. 33-34; Čović 1983, p. 122, tav. 14, 3; Marović, Čović 1983, p. 191-232, cf. fig. 15, 13.

15. Čović 1983, p. 120; Buršić-Matjašić 1994, p. 247-260.

16. Marović 1985, p. 5-33; Marović 1991, p. 15-200; Marović, Čović 1983, p. 191-232.

17. Codacci-Terlević 2006, tav. 2, 14; Marović, Čović 1983, tav. 19, 2-4, 12; tav. 22, 11.

18. Marović 1991, fig. 47; 1, 4; Marović, Čović 1983, tav. 22, 3, 9, 12.

19. Govedarica 1985 (1987), p. 57-70; Codacci-Terlević 2006, tav. 1, 1; Marović 1991, p. 42, 7; fig. 32, 6, 7; Marović, Čović 1983, p. 15, 5.

20. Lonza 1981, tav. 21; Maselli Scotti 1989, p. 509-518; Marović 1991, p. 90; fig. 40, 8; Urban 1993, p. 248; fig. 136, 10; Hänsel *et al.* 1997, p. 83-85, fig. 39, 7; Mihovilić *et al.* 2003, p. 389-408, in particolare p. 403, fig. 13.

21. Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 194-195.

22. Codacci-Terlević 2006, tav. 3, 28-31.

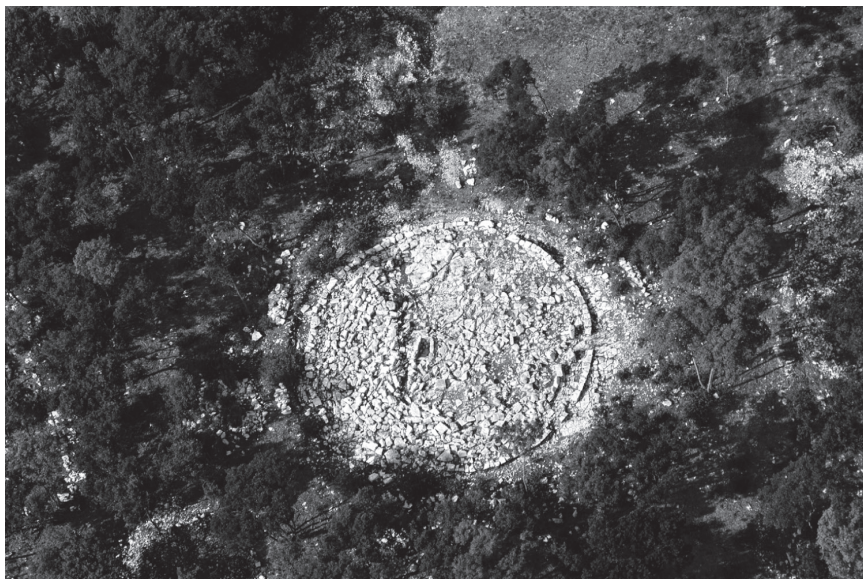


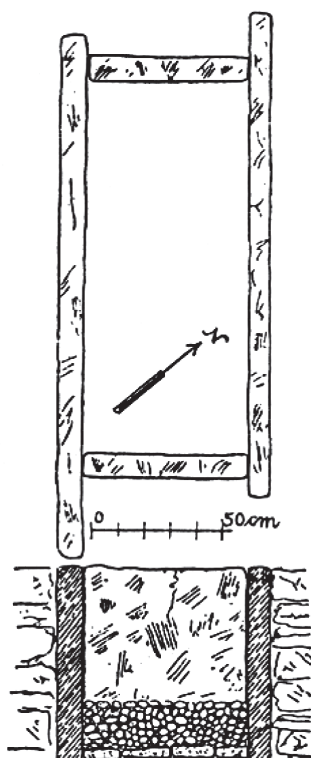
Fig. 5 – Foto aerea del tumulo di Barbariga, (Istria, Croazia). Foto: Enzo Morović.



Fig. 6 – La tomba situata al centro del tumulo di Barbariga al momento della sua scoperta. Foto: G. Codacci-Terlević.

Quasi perfettamente al centro dell'area delimitata dal muro a secco di forma circolare si trovava la tomba, orientata in direzione NO/SE (*fig. 5*). Le sue dimensioni corrispondono a 1,47m di lunghezza, 75cm di larghezza e circa 50cm di profondità. La tomba si presentava priva della lastra di copertura di solito presente nella maggior parte delle sepolture rinvenute negli altri tumuli istriani indagati (*fig. 6*). Abbiamo potuto verificare che la tomba è stata saccheggiata in passato; infatti risultava essere riempita da uno strato di terra misto a pietrisco che potrebbe essere caduto al suo interno dopo che era stata profanata. Sul fondo abbiamo potuto notare una piccola quantità di sabbia marina con ciottoli di colore bianco e conchiglie marine mescolati a terriccio. Potrebbe trattarsi dei resti della preparazione che originariamente si doveva trovare sul fondo della tomba, sulla quale veniva deposto il corpo del defunto. Si tratta in effetti di un rito già accertato in alcuni dei tumuli istriani meglio conservati. Nel tumulo scavato da Gnirs agli inizi del secolo scorso sull'Isola di Brioni Maggiore (V. Brijun), precisamente sul Monte Rancon (Rankun), è stato notato uno strato di ciottoli accuratamente scelti e disposti in più file alla base della tomba, dove era stato deposto il defunto in posizione rannicchiata (*fig. 7*).²³ La stessa situazione è stata successivamente riscontrata anche nei tumuli di Val Marin (Marin Dol) e di Monte Bombista

23. Gnirs 1925, fig. 24.



**Abb. 24. Plan und Schnitt
des Hockergrabes
auf Rancon.**

*Fig. 7 – Sezione della tomba a
tumulo di M. Rancon, Isola
di Brioni Maggiore
(Gnirs 1925, fig. 24).*

(Bumbišta) nei pressi di Pola, a Castelnovo vicino Carmed (Krmédski Novi grad), nonché a Zabniaco (Žamnjak) nei dintorni di Rovigno.²⁴ All'interno della tomba non abbiamo potuto riscontrare la presenza dei resti del defunto. Abbiamo però notato che all'esterno di questa, lungo il lato sudoccidentale, si trovava un accumulo di frammenti di ceramica non decorati e, tra questi, era un dente umano, che potrebbe essere l'unico resto del defunto a noi pervenuto.

Quasi al centro del tumulo, in prossimità del lato nordorientale della tomba, è stata notata una concentrazione di reperti, precisamente di ossa animali e molluschi marini, nonché una scheggia in selce ed un pendaglio in pietra, forse un elemento di corredo residuo in seguito al rimaneggiamento della tomba. Similmente, nella tomba a tumulo indagata dalla Soprintendenza ai Beni Archeologici nei dintorni di Udine, a Selvis di Remanzacco, databile alla fine del Bronzo Antico, figuravano un pugnale bronzeo ed un pendaglio in pietra.²⁵ Nella tomba a tumulo di Zabniaco (Žamnjak) presso Rovigno (Rovinj) in Istria, databile al Bronzo Antico, uno dei defunti era corredato da una collana di saltaleoni in bronzo e due pendagli d'ambra.²⁶

La tomba si distingue inoltre per la sua architettura in rapporto a quelle degli altri tumuli istriani indagati. A differenza di quelle degli altri tumuli istriani, che consistono in lastre in calcare formanti una cista litica, questa è costruita con dei blocchi in calcare squadriati di varie dimensioni; a parte questa, solamente la tomba rinvenuta all'interno del tumulo di Maclavun (Maklavun) è costruita con blocchi in calcare squadriati. L'unica differenza risiede nelle dimensioni delle due tombe. Quella di Maclavun (Maklavun), della lunghezza di ca. 2,20m, poteva accogliere i resti di un inumato sdraiato in posizione supina, a differenza di quella del tumulo di Barbariga, le cui dimensioni più ridotte ci inducono a concludere che il defunto si trovasse in posizione contratta, com'è d'uso nella maggior parte dei tumuli istriani.²⁷ In base ad un attento riesame della tomba a tumulo di Maclavun (Maklavun), sembra che questa sia stata costruita

durante la fase più antica di erezione del tumulo. Forse, oltre a questa ci sarebbe stata un'altra sepoltura entro una tomba situata al centro stesso del tumulo, della quale rimangono solamente tre blocchi in calcare.²⁸

Dal punto di vista della tecnica costruttiva, la differenza sostanziale tra i tumuli istriani ed i tumuli scavati dell'Italia nordorientale (Friuli) risiede nel tipo di materiale utilizzato per la costruzione del cumulo che ricopre la tomba. Ciò dipende ovviamente dal tipo di materiale a disposizione a seconda della geomorfologia del terreno sul quale viene edificato il tumulo. Per la costruzione del nucleo della tomba dei tumuli dell'Italia nordorientale vengono utilizzati prevalentemente ciottoli o pietre provenienti da depositi fluviali, accuratamente scelti, che ricoprono la fossa in cui è deposto l'inumato (come nel caso di Selvis di Remanzacco) oppure formano (come nel caso dei tumuli di S. Osvaldo e di Mereto di Tomba) il caratteristico nucleo di pietra avente forma di calotta troncoconica entro la quale è custodita la sepoltura. Questo poi viene ricoperto da diversi strati caratterizzati dall'alternanza di sedimenti di origine diversa, soprattutto ghiaia ed argilla, che accrescono le dimensioni della struttura difendendone meglio la sepoltura.²⁹ Nel caso dei tumuli istriani, in ambiente carsico, a parte i due

24. Gnirs 1925, p. 41-43; Bačić 1961, p. 199; Vitasović 2005, p. 409-418.

25. Codacci-Terlević 2006, tav. 3, 27; Càssola Guida, Corazza 2002, p. 54.

26. Bačić 1960, fig. 1.

27. Bačić 1960; Buršić-Matjašić 1997, p. 21-38; Hänsel, Teržan 2001, p. 69-107.

28. Bačić 1960, p. 201; Hänsel, Teržan 2001, p. 81-82.

29. Vitri 1982, p. 37-39; Ruaro Loseri 1983, p. 128-132; Vitri 1983, p. 84-86; Càssola Guida, Corazza 2002, p. 52-59; Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 196; Corazza *et al.* 2006.

esempi citati, viene edificata una calotta di pietre di dimensioni varie, all'interno della quale, ad altezza variabile, per lo più verso la sommità della calotta stessa, viene deposta la cista litica che custodisce i resti dell'inumato. Per la realizzazione di questa vengono utilizzate lastre in calcare squadrate. L'aspetto finale è quello del caratteristico cumulo di pietre, le cui dimensioni variano.³⁰

Restano ancora da chiarire diversi aspetti connessi ai tumuli istriani. Ad eccezione dei resti umani scavati nei tumuli sulla collina di Monte Sego (Mušego) e nella necropoli dell'età del bronzo di Monte Orcino (Vrčin), nella maggior parte dei casi mancano del tutto analisi dettagliate dei resti antropologici.³¹

Inoltre, la situazione in Istria si presenta più complessa. Difatti, a differenza del Friuli dove i tumuli sembrano, sulla base delle ricerche condotte fino ad oggi, non essere correlati con i siti abitati dell'età del bronzo e sono prevalentemente di dimensioni maggiori, eretti in posizioni elevate, ben visibili da lontano, come monumenti eterni in onore del defunto e messaggeri della conquista e del possesso del territorio circostante da parte di questo e della sua comunità.³² In Istria compaiono sia tumuli isolati di dimensioni superiori che vere e proprie necropoli di tumuli di dimensioni ben più ridotte. Sarebbe interessante ricostruire il tipo di rapporto che hanno avuto i costruttori di questi tumuli imponenti, prevalentemente databili al Bronzo Antico con la fondazione dei castellieri istriani. L'uso di seppellire sotto tumulo continua pure nella fasi successive, quando si hanno necropoli con tombe a tumulo dislocate in prossimità dei castellieri dell'età del bronzo, alcune delle quali sono state indagate.³³ È interessante il fatto che nell'unico abitato dell'età del bronzo scavato sistematicamente di recente in Istria, quello di Moncodogno (Monkodonja), sia stata rinvenuta una sepoltura a tumulo al di sotto del lato meridionale della monumentale entrata occidentale del castelliere. A detta degli scavatori, questa era in origine ricoperta da un tumulo che racchiudeva la tipica cista in calcare entro la quale erano stati deposti i resti di una giovane donna e di un bambino. La tomba, infatti, venne rispettata nelle fasi costruttive successive dell'abitato e inglobata nella costruzione più tarda della torre meridionale quale parte integrante dell'entrata occidentale del castelliere, il che ne mette in risalto la sua importanza.³⁴

Resta comune la funzione ideologica di tali tombe nel territorio del *Caput Adriae*, tutte edificate in siti accuratamente scelti, quali sommità di colline o dorsali che le pongono ulteriormente in rilievo. Ciò è ulteriormente confermato dalla sepoltura a tumulo di Barbariga, edificata sulla sommità di una collina antistante la baia di Maricchio, a circa 18,83 m sul livello del mare, posizione dalla quale è possibile controllare una vasta porzione di costa e che nel contempo risulta ben visibile a chi si avvicinasse all'Istria dal mare.

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30. Battaglia 1958, p. 419-434; Bačić 1961, p. 15-23; Cannarella 1968, p. 182; Bačić 1973, p. 7-23; Bačić 1960, p. 197-210; Battaglia 1958, p. 419-434; Govedarica 1989, p. 71-80; Mihovilić 1989, p. 73; Buršić-Matjašić 1997, p. 21-38; Buršić-Matjašić 2003, p. 171-186; Codacci-Terlević 2006, p. 41-74.

31. Schiavuzzi 1914, p. 209-213; Corrain, Capitanio 1968, p. 6-31.

32. Vitri 1982; Ruaro Loseri 1983; Vitri 1983; Càssola Guida, Corazza 2002; Corazza *et al.* 2006; Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007.

33. Battaglia 1958, p. 419-434; Cannarella 1968, p. 182; Buršić-Matjašić 1989, p. 475-494; Mihovilić *et al.* 2008; Mihovilić *et al.* in questo volume.

34. Hänsel *et al.* 2008, p. 17-24, cf. p. 21; Teržan, Hänsel in questo volume.

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A SPECIFIC TYPE OF THOLOS IN THE NORTHERN ADRIATIC

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ABSTRACT

Burial mounds in the Region of Istria in the northern Adriatic have long been known but few of them have been excavated in the modern period. Interestingly, they are of different types, in regard to the manner of burial as well as kind of the stone-construction. One of them, on the hilltop of Maklavun, has the characteristics of a tholos. Its dating to the Middle Bronze Age is reasonably certain. The question arises whether the tholos, the form of which has rarely been found outside Greece, was built after prototypes from the Mycenaean world.

Burial mounds in the region of Istria in the northern Adriatic have long been known but only a few of them have been excavated in modern times. While all of them are from the Bronze Age, they display different types, both in terms of burial ritual as well as in their stone construction. As has been shown by Bernhard Hänsel and Kristina Mihovilić, one basic type of grave at Monkodonja is the cist tomb (Steinkistengrab), built of large stone slabs.¹ At Monkodonja, cist tombs are integrated into large rectangular structures, positioned at both sides of the main gate into the settlement and one of them is even found to be positioned inside the tower as a memorial to the founder. At Mušego, the tumuli necropolis of Monkodonja, the cist graves are placed in the centre of huge stone mounds with perfectly built tops. A third type of burial mound is represented by the tumulus on the hilltop of Maklavun, in the area of the castelliere Karastak, adjacent to Monkodonja, which has certain characteristics of a tholos.

The tumulus of Maklavun had already been excavated in the 1960s by Boris Bačić (1960), the director at that time of the Archaeological Museum in Pula and the leading Istrian archaeologist after World War II, who dedicated himself primarily to the prehistoric archaeology of Istria. It is apparent from his description that the height of the tumulus before excavation measured around 3m, while the diameter was almost 16m, and that its white cone, as the most dominant point in the area, was visible from a distance (*fig. 1*). The tumulus, built of large stone blocks which had been worked on site, was placed on a *ca.* 1m tall stone terrace, which itself had been artificially created due to the working of the stone. The terrace, however, had also been positioned with purpose, since the emphasized terrace around the peak of the hill had the effect of making the prominent position of the tumulus stand out even more.

In 1993, Klara Buršič-Matjašić carried out a revisory survey of the tumulus, which did not result in any new observations, supplements, or information (1997). When we began our international research project into the Bronze Age fortified settlement at Monkodonja in 1997 (Hänsel *et al.* 1997; Teržan *et al.* 1999), we also surveyed the tumulus at Maklavun and found that it had a special type of stone construction that

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1. See Mihovilić *et al.*, this volume.



Fig. 1 – Maklavun, aerial view (Photo B. Hänsel 2007).

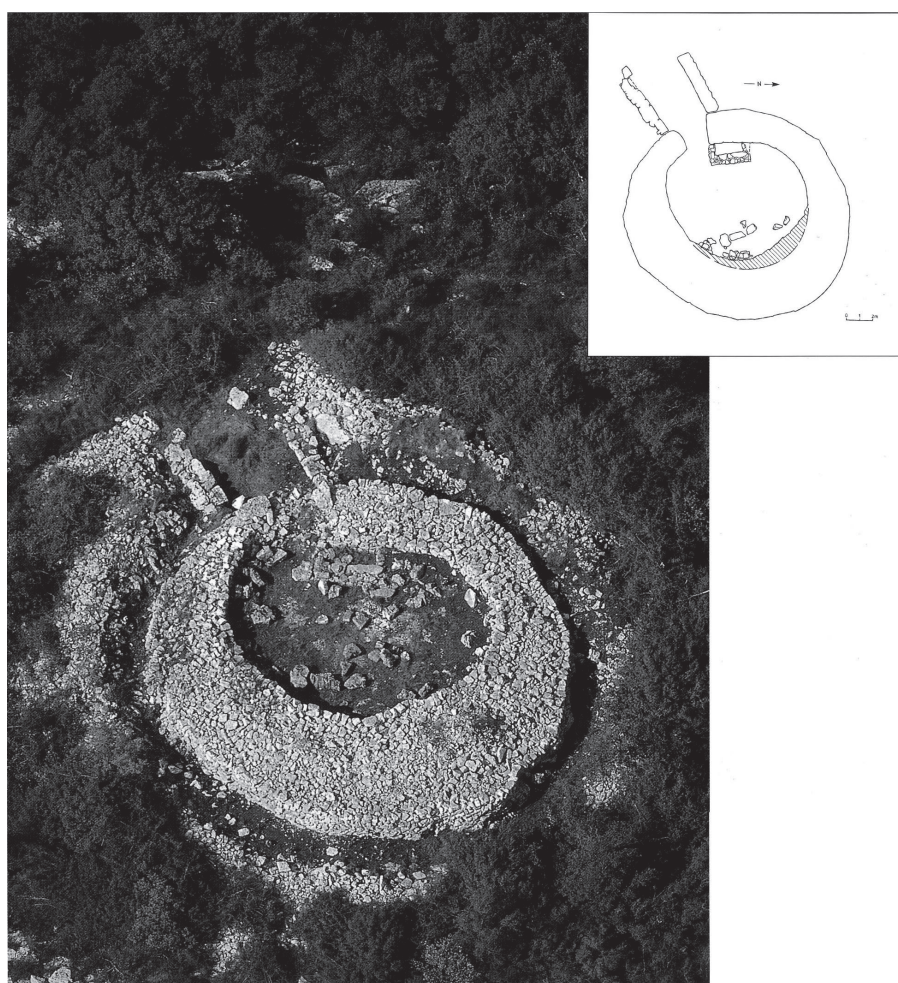


Fig. 2 – Maklavun, aerial photograph (Photo O. Braasch 2001) and sketch.

was not apparent from the publications of Bačić and Buršić-Matjašić (Bačić 1960; Buršić-Matjašić 1997; Matošević 1998). This fact inspired us to document again the previously investigated tumulus, in the form of taking measurements and photographs and making drawings, in an attempt to re-evaluate it (Hänsel, Teržan 1999; Hänsel, Teržan 2000). Our interpretation is merely preliminary since revisory excavation is necessary in the cases of several still unexcavated sections of the stone ring of the tumulus, the central grave chamber and the stone mantle on the exterior side of the stone wall.

On the basis of the present state of preservation of the tumulus, the following description can be given (fig. 2, see also Mihovilić *et al.* 2001, p. 60-65): today it is not possible to establish with complete certainty whether the present contours of the stone ring of the tumulus on the inner and outer sides correspond entirely to its original form. Bačić removed the majority of fallen stones from the interior of the tumulus and most probably placed or discarded some of them on the stone ring of the grave chamber. It is also not known if any changes or additions were made during repairs to the wall in 1993, carried out under the supervision of Klara Buršić-Matjašić (1997). Hence only for the north western section of the grave chamber can it be claimed that the contours of the tholos are quite certain, as in that section the rectangular stone grave structure rests on the stone wall of the grave chamber. On the eastern side and partly also on the southern side, the circular wall is unusually wide, which gives the entire structure of the tholos an irregular, asymmetric form. It is conjectured that the wall in this area had not been entirely excavated and that its reconstruction was started at too great a height. Despite these uncertainties regarding several details of the wall, there is no doubt that the circular wall of the tumulus was built in a very solid manner using large stone blocks, as can clearly be seen at several places on the originally preserved wall. The latter can be distinguished from the reconstructed wall since it contains soil between the stone faces, while those of the reconstructed wall are hollow.

Particularly intriguing were the stone blocks of trapezoidal form, measuring 0.60-1.00m in length and 0.20-0.40m in width (fig. 3); these were situated inside the tomb chamber as well as on the outside, in the excavated fill. It would seem that Bačić noticed they had been artificially shaped and consequently chose to preserve them. Perhaps this explains why they were left lying on the floor of the tomb chamber. Some of the stones have slightly rounded concave surfaces, which are clearly visible (fig. 4). This leads us to infer that they served as special construction elements in the formation of a vaulted chamber. Perhaps this tomb chamber was constructed in the pseudovault technique, similar to that used for Mycenaean tholoi.

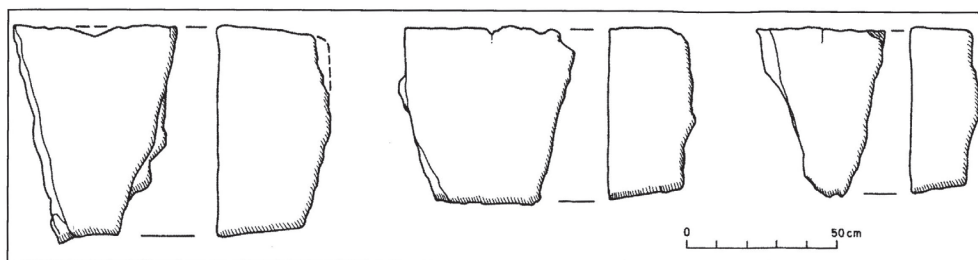


Fig. 3 – Maklavun, some examples of trapezoidal stone-blocks.



Fig. 4 – Maklavun, some examples of trapezoidal stone-blocks with slightly rounded concave surfaces.

The construction of the entrance also allows us to reconstruct the tomb as a tholos. It is visible even from the aerial photograph that the area between the dromos and the interior of the grave chamber exhibits a completely different structure and positioning of its stone blocks, and it has been hypothesised that the entrance to the tholos would have been at this spot (*fig. 2*). The lateral view from the exterior side supports this theory (*fig. 5*). It is apparent that particularly large flat blocks lay on the original surface of the entrance to the tomb. These blocks are covered by smaller stones and stones of the usual size, as if they had fallen from the side or down from higher positions (*fig. 5, 6*). The impression received is that, during the collapse of the entrance façade, first the large stone lintel that formed the roof of the entrance and its main support fell to the ground and broke into several fragments (*fig. 6*). The side pressure then caused the full collapse of the entire entrance and probably also the dromos.



Fig. 5 – Maklavun, view of the dromos with its façade.

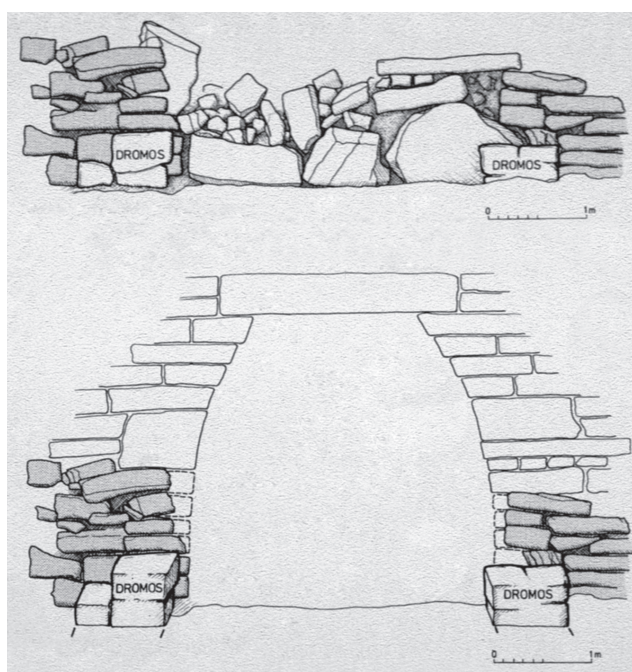


Fig. 6 – Maklavun, drawing of the entrance.

The dromos was built of large stone blocks, which are preserved only in their lower positions (*fig. 5*). It is no longer possible to establish its original height but it is clear that only on the inner side was its face built from the large orthostats which are still partly preserved on both sides of the dromos foundations. A relatively wide and luxurious passage built of large stone slabs and blocks led to the tomb, which culminated in a similarly imposing portal with a large stone lintel (*fig. 6*). It is difficult to establish today how long the dromos must have been. Its preserved length measures 6m and it is possible that it was even longer. The length of the dromos certainly indicates that the diameter of the entire tumulus must have been much greater than the circular stone enclosure of the domed tomb.

It is clear that at Maklavun we have a tumulus that differs significantly from other previously investigated Bronze Age burial mounds in Istria (as was pointed out by our colleague Kristina Mihovilić).² If we search for analogies, they can be found in the Aegean region, where the tholos as a type of grave architecture is known as early as the Early Minoan period onwards, especially in south eastern central Crete, in the Mesara-plain, and on the Greek mainland mostly from the Middle Helladic period (MH III) and the Late Helladic period (LH) (Xanthoudides 1924; Branigan 1970; Branigan 1998; Papadimitriou 2001).

The Cretan-Mycenaean tholoi differ in essential details from the tumulus at Maklavun, as the majority were carved or cut into the sides of hills and represent carefully planned and statically designed architectural structures (Kamm 2000). But in the vicinity of the Mesara there are also tholos-tombs with a circular, thick-walled structure, which are found above ground and with a single door-way. These are very similar to the Istrian tumulus of Maklavun (*fig. 7*), constructed both with relatively small stones and in nearly the same dimensions (Branigan 1998, p. 13-16; Panagiotopoulos 2000, p. 48-49, *fig. 37*). There are also others where the domed tomb was built in a stone burial mound. One such at Pylos in Messenia, in the western Peloponnese, was discovered by Georgios Styl. Korres (Korres 1980; Korres 1987; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, p. 97-103, *fig. 58, 61*; Papadimitriou 2001, p. 35-36).



Fig. 7 – Odigitria, Crete, tholoi (after Panagiotopoulos 2001, p. 49, fig. 37).

2. See Mihovilić *et al.*, this volume.



Fig. 8 – Voidokoilia Pylias, Messenia, tumulus with tholos-tomb (after Korres 1987, fig. 1).

Tumulus A from Voidokoilia Pylias is especially interesting (fig. 8), as the stone mantle of the burial mound contained nine graves in large *pithoi*, placed radially to the centre of the tumulus. In the centre of the burial mound a Mycenaean vaulted tomb with a dromos would later have been built, hence making it of the same type as the tumulus at Maklavun. The creation of stone tumuli exhibiting burial in *pithoi* is dated by Korres to the Middle Helladic period (MH). The tholos tomb on the other hand dates to the chronological span of the LH I-LH IIIB phases. Korres supports the hypothesis of a local development of burial architecture in Messenia, and that the Mycenaean tumuli with vaulted graves developed out of the Middle Helladic stone burial mounds.

The similarities between the Messenian tumulus at Voidokoilia and that of Maklavun are so evident that they cannot represent mere coincidence. Although earlier graves were not discovered in the strata of the tumulus at Maklavun (a fact which could perhaps be re-checked, since, as has already been noted, the circular stone wall on the eastern side is very wide), this, in effect, supports Korres' hypothesis about the existence of a tholos in a tumulus built of stone. Because the tumulus at Maklavun had already been robbed at some undeterminable time, Bačić discovered only a few fragments of pottery and a single bronze awl, which allow only approximate dating. Among the preserved pottery are the same types of vessels as at Monkodonja, indicating that the tholos had to have been constructed at a time when Monkodonja was also in use, *i.e.* in the Early or Middle Bronze Age (Hänsel, Teržan 1999, p. 86-87, fig. 16; Hänsel, Teržan 2000, p. 171-173; Mihovilić *et al.* 2001, p. 64).

As was shown by Hänsel and Mihovilić, the only discovered graves so far at Monkodonja are stone cists in rectangular walled structures as an integral architectural part of the settlement walls. These graves have been dated to the Early Bronze Age with ^{14}C radiocarbon analysis. However, tumulus 6 at Mušego was dated

by radiocarbon analysis to the Middle Bronze Age. From this it is apparent that the development of funerary architecture in Istria did not proceed in the same manner as in Messenia, *i.e.* from a stone tumulus with a central burial in a cist tomb to a tumulus with a central vaulted grave. Rather, the tumuli with central cist tombs were contemporary with the tholos at Maklavun. The differences between individual forms of grave architecture were hence not governed by chronological factors, but rather sociological, hierarchical and/or perhaps even ethnic factors.

The tholos at Maklavun must have belonged to some prominent chief or member of a ruling princely family from the neighbouring castelli of Karaštak (Matošević 1998; Mihovilić *et al.* 2001, p. 58-59), which probably held a similar position to the north of the Rovinj “ager”, in the direction of the Lim Fjord, as Monkodonja held to the south, in terms of control over the sea lanes along the western Istrian coast.

It should also be noted that at Mušego among the thirteen mentioned tumuli located at present, at least two tumuli exist of exceptional size and height, which are located outside the framework of the tumuli group and are rather more isolated. The first of these is located on the north western peak of Mušego, directly opposite Monkodonja. The other is located on the southern peak, probably marked the southern edge of the entire necropolis and, at the same time, visually dominated all of southern Istria with views extending beyond Vodnjan all the way to Pula. It has been hypothesised that these are not of the same type as the three currently excavated tumuli with a central cist tomb but rather that they represent the remains of a tumulus with a tholos, of the same type as at Maklavun. If our observations prove correct, this would mean that at Mušego we have a necropolis with different but contemporary types of tumuli. The question of how to explain such differences remains open. These were certainly graves that belonged to a social elite that lived at Monkodonja. It is also evident that social differentiation existed within the framework of this elite, whether in terms of social status or provenance. Only further research will offer answers to these questions and explicate the mysteries of the funerary architecture, cult and religion of Bronze Age Istria and though our research project has already entered its second decade, we have only just begun the task of tracing these mysteries at Monkodonja.³

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3. We would like to thank Barbara Smith-Demo for the translation and Matija Črešnar for technical help.

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BURIAL MOUNDS IN CROATIA

LANDSCAPES OF CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

Burial mounds act as agents in the relationship between prehistoric communities and their landscape and play a crucial role in claiming, gaining and preserving control of the landscape. As such, they were implemented by prehistoric communities through notions of identity and continuity. This paper addresses the transformation of that role from the early to late prehistoric periods in different areas of Croatia, based on the chronological differences between the burial mounds in continental and coastal areas. Mounds in coastal areas appear as early as the Early Bronze Age, while in continental regions they appear only in the Early Iron Age with a rather abrupt break in the middle of the last millennium B.C. and a very short reappearance in the Roman period. The size, number and distribution of burial mounds were mainly determined by factors from within the social framework of specific communities, which is, to a limited extent, reflected in their contents. The politics of use and re-use of burial mounds in periods following their initial construction is even more interesting in those cases where we can establish the sequence of culturally and/or ethnically different communities in the same area; or where we can establish a large time span between two major occupation periods.

INTRODUCTION

Croatia covers at least three fundamentally different geographic and climatic areas. Differences in palaeoecological conditions were also reflected in the development of prehistoric cultures, which were largely dependent on their environment. In almost all chronological periods, different features of material culture, ritual practices and other cultural concepts played specific roles and followed individual paths in the chronological and cultural framework of each of those areas. Burial mounds are no exception.

While the appearance of such mounds in coastal areas can be established as early as the Early Bronze Age (or even Eneolithic), in continental areas they appear only in the Early Iron Age with a rather abrupt break in the middle of the last millennium B.C. and a very short (and spatially rather limited) reappearance in the Roman period. The mountainous region separating Northern Croatia from its coastal part (including the Adriatic inland area) somehow stayed in between those two fundamental development patterns. In this area mound burials are rather rare and probably cover the period from the Middle Bronze Age to the Iron Age, although this might be a false conclusion caused by the very basic state of the research.

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Beside the obvious chronological difference, the basic difference lies, of course, in the material available for use in the erection of such monuments: while in the south, stone mounds (called *gomile*) are predominant, earthen mounds (or tumuli) are almost the exclusive form of such burials in the northern area.

Burial mounds are fundamentally perceived as a *form of burial*, embedded in the religious sphere of communities involved. However, the impetus for the creation of such a specific form of burial in a certain area, as well as the source of non-environmental influences on their size, number and distribution, probably came from within the social framework of specific communities. The only reflection of that social structure is, however, the material and anthropological content of such monuments, and, therefore, has to be included in this discussion. This paper will provide a brief overview of burial mounds in Croatia in relation to specific areas and chronological periods but emphasis will be on burial mounds as agents in the relationship between prehistoric communities and their landscape.

There were two basic hypotheses explaining the appearance of burial mounds in Croatia, which could be applied both to the continental region at the beginning of the Early Iron Age and to the coastal region at the beginning of the Bronze Age. The first one was that mound burials are a characteristic feature introduced by the migration of a new population into the area in question. Usually these new populations were seen as nomadic or semi-nomadic cattle or sheep herders. This was also used as a plausible explanation for the distribution of specific categories of material culture, such as pottery or horse equipment, which were claimed to be specific typological markers of those communities. Based on these assumptions, we saw the emergence of models describing several waves of migration coming from the east (in the Eneolithic, Middle Bronze Age, and finally at the beginning of the Iron Age), and spreading “burial mound ideology” throughout different areas of Europe. Such models were also supported by historical examples from different areas of the world. However tempting this picture might be, when we look closely at the archaeological record we must admit that we have no conclusive arguments to support it. Sometimes as archaeologists we have to be more aware of what we do not (or even cannot) see, than of what we know. First of all, we must not discard all sorts of “non-archaeological”, or perhaps environmental circumstances that largely influenced prehistoric communities. Although some very important preliminary steps were made in that direction in Dalmatia (Chapman *et al.* 1996), we still lack full scale studies concentrating on specific closed geographical units. Without multidisciplinary research, which will include absolute dating, archaeobotanics and archaeozoology as well as other scientific disciplines, and systematic contextual analysis of a sufficient number of different sites in specific areas, we cannot make any serious conclusions on the way of life, economy and dynamics of change in any population. It is also true of intra- and intercommunal relations at a specific period in specific areas. We also have to realize that we have to take a step away from the burial mounds themselves because those data can be collected only (or primarily) at settlements or even further into the landscape (“off-site” analysis).

DALMATIA

These are the reasons why we still cannot offer a more conclusive model for the emergence and distribution of the Cetina Culture along the Adriatic coast and further inland and the relation of that cultural phenomenon with the appearance of mound burials. The chronology of the Cetina Culture, especially in its early phases, as well as a definition of individual development stages of that cultural phenomenon still remain an open issue (Marović, Čović 1983; Govedarica 1989; Marović 1991; Della Casa 1995; Marijanović 1998; Forenbaher 2000; Govedarica 2006). However, we can accept that this cultural phenomenon in its broad sense appears at the final stages of the Eneolithic and that it reaches (if not marks) the transition into the Early Bronze Age on the eastern Adriatic coast.

Whatever the chronology or internal division of the Cetina Culture might be, the first tumuli on the eastern shore of the Adriatic are identified with that cultural phenomenon and they probably appear at the beginning of the second half of the third millennium B.C. Typical mounds of the Cetina Culture are made of stone. The burial ritual is so diverse and varies from necropolis to necropolis, and even from mound to

mound, that it is practically impossible to provide a description of any standardised burial form. However, we can roughly say that those mounds generally contain single or multiple burials in stone cists usually located centrally, at the base of the monument. In some cases human remains are found within the mound without any visible grave structure. Skeletal remains are rarely complete and almost always at least partially dislocated, which could suggest some sort of secondary burial practice. In cases where we can reconstruct the original position of the skeleton it is in a contracted position on one or the other side. The grave goods are extremely rare and hard to connect with individual burials, which makes their cultural and chronological determination even more difficult. Metal finds are definitely more the exception than the rule and the vast majority of pottery is found in fragments (which rarely represent complete vessels) usually distributed in different areas of the mound.¹

The construction features of these mounds differ significantly from contemporary kurgans with pit graves,² thus making a strong argument against a steppe origin and a subsequent diffusion of tumuli across Europe in the Eneolithic (at least for the eastern Adriatic coast and inland). On the other hand, we have no plausible explanation for the appearance of the stone-cist tumuli in central Dalmatia either. Regardless of the theory of their origin, we cannot establish any documented diffusion route to this area where they are present in large numbers and a consistent form (Govedarica 1989, p. 215-217). However, the fact that almost from the beginning these mounds contained both skeletal and cremation burials³ possibly suggests that at least to some extent the appearance of burial mounds has something to do with some kind of transformation process within the social structure and not only with the simple introduction of an already formulated burial custom.

Another question is whether we can identify the appearance of the Late Eneolithic/Early Bronze Age stone cist tumuli burials on the eastern Adriatic coast, islands and hinterland with a compact cultural phenomenon such as the Cetina Culture. My opinion is that somehow we have to separate the idea of such a burial from any given fixed set of cultural features, which are usually perceived as the definition of an archaeological culture and are commonly based on material culture. In his discussion on the pottery attributed to the Cetina Culture in the western Balkan hinterland, B. Govedarica makes a clear distinction between attribution to “the Cetina-type” and to the Cetina Culture and provides an appropriate methodological framework for future research (Govedarica 2006), which is crucial for any scientifically relevant study of such complex phenomena.

The end of the Cetina Culture, as well as its beginning, is burdened with many unresolved chronological and cultural problems. That is especially true of its relation to the Posušje (or Dinaric) Culture, the name of which is given to the cultural phenomenon which chronologically partially overlaps the Cetina Culture. In its final stages the Posušje Culture succeeds to the Cetina Culture in the Dinaric area. The importance of this issue is further emphasized by some finds, which are crucial to understand the Early Bronze Age in this area of Croatia in relation to the broader European context, such as the famous stone cist tumulus burial in Živalji near Obrovac with a triangular dagger and *litzen* pottery fragments, which is by some authors attributed to the late phase of the Cetina Culture and by others to the Posušje Culture (Marović, Čović 1983, p. 207-209; Govedarica 1989, p. 154). Mounds attributed to the Posušje Culture are located next to the mounds of the Cetina Culture and material attributed to the Posušje Culture is sometimes interpreted as a secondary deposition within Cetina Culture mounds. In some cases authors use the same or similar arguments to attribute the same mound to one or the other culture. Some authors claim that, as opposed to the bi-ritual practice of the Cetina Culture, the Posušje Culture has exclusively skeletal burials but at the same time

1. Usually, especially in older literature, this kind of pottery distribution within mounds has been interpreted as the remains of some kind of funerary feast. However, close study of burial mounds in different cultures over past decades offers other explanations. In the case of the Cetina Culture, recent excavations also discovered animal bones, fireplaces, as well as some other features previously unrecorded at such mounds. All these things suggested a deeper complexity of such monuments regarding their structure and the dynamics of their use and reuse.

2. One of the extremely rare examples of a tumulus with pit graves and Corded Ware pottery from neighbouring regions is Ljeskova Glavica located near Trebinje in Hercegovina (Čović 1980, p. 35-38; Govedarica 1989, p. 213).

3. While I. Marović claims that cremation burials are present even in the earliest stages of the Cetina Culture (Marović 1991, p. 151-164), B. Govedarica claims that they appear only after the initial, “proto-Cetina” phase (Govedarica 1989, p. 116, 134).

some mounds with cremation burials are attributed to the Posušje Culture. Since these two phenomena share an almost identical distribution area and at the initial stages of the Bronze Age they are apparently simultaneous, it is very hard to make any firm distinguishing criteria other than pottery. Preliminary results from the very important excavation of two tumuli by D. Periša at the site of Mali Mosor near Dicmo in the Dalmatian hinterland could provide the most recent and valuable contribution to this discussion and our understanding of the interrelation between the Cetina and the Posušje Culture (Periša 2005).

However, the very small number of settlements which have been excavated and published so far did not provide a stratigraphy which would firmly establish a clear distinction between these two groups. At this point, I believe that a significant change in our understanding of the early stages of Bronze Age Dalmatia can be achieved only through interdisciplinary research of areas where we can relate settlements to mounds. Only systematic excavation of settlements can provide the relevant stratigraphy necessary for the establishment of a relative sequence of cultural phenomena in certain areas, which then can and indeed has to be checked against data from burial mounds. In both cases, all methodological resources have to be applied to the full extent, especially those related to absolute dating and environmental archaeology. Before achieving that goal, any firm conclusion on cultural background and the development of burial mounds in this area would be dangerously close to speculation.

Later periods of the Bronze Age in Dalmatia are even more evasive than those we have discussed so far. Practically all that we can firmly claim is that some of the stone-cist burial mounds belong (or at least were re-used) in this period. The same is true for the early phase of the Iron Age. In a completely opposite manner to continental Croatia, in that period in Dalmatia only scarce finds can be associated with burial mounds. The situation changes at the beginning of the Late Iron Age, when reuse, adaptation and perhaps construction of some burial mounds play a significant role in the establishment of local warrior elites in some areas of Dalmatia. The central points of that process are rich skeletal burials in stone cists. An interesting fact is that in other areas of Dalmatia and on some islands almost identical material assemblages were discovered in flat graves. After that, centuries passed before another interesting phenomenon occurred – medieval burials in stone cists incorporated into prehistoric mounds.⁴

ISTRIA

Since the recent paper by G. Codacci-Terlević contains a detailed history of the research of stone mounds in Istria (Codacci-Terlević 2006; Codacci-Terlević, this volume), I will just provide some general remarks. Stone mounds with stone-cist burials are located throughout Istria and some of them were excavated as early as the 19th c. However, in the last two centuries extensive agricultural and infrastructural projects wiped out a large number of those monuments.

Based on Aegean-type daggers discovered at the sites of Marin Dol and Bombista near Pula, some authors suggest the possibility that stone mounds already appeared in Istria at the very beginning of the Bronze Age (Čović 1983, p. 118-119). Although there are some individual exceptions from the following rule, Istrian stone mounds generally cover a centrally positioned stone-cist with a single skeletal burial in a contracted position. However, it is not unusual to find the remains of several individuals within one cist. The skeletal remains are often incomplete and placed on a layer of sea gravel. The grave goods are exceptionally rare and most of the mounds contain rather scanty archaeological material (mostly pottery shards). The stone cist is usually encircled with a circular drystone wall but some of those mounds contain other more elaborate stone constructions. A lack of relevant material makes those mounds hard to date but, on grounds of pottery and some other features, most of those mounds are dated to late phases of the Early and Middle Bronze Age (Codacci-Terlević 2006, p. 42-53). Despite a few discoveries of fragments

4. However, this requires separate study and in this paper will be used only as an illustration of a specific instance of the adoption of the burial landscape.

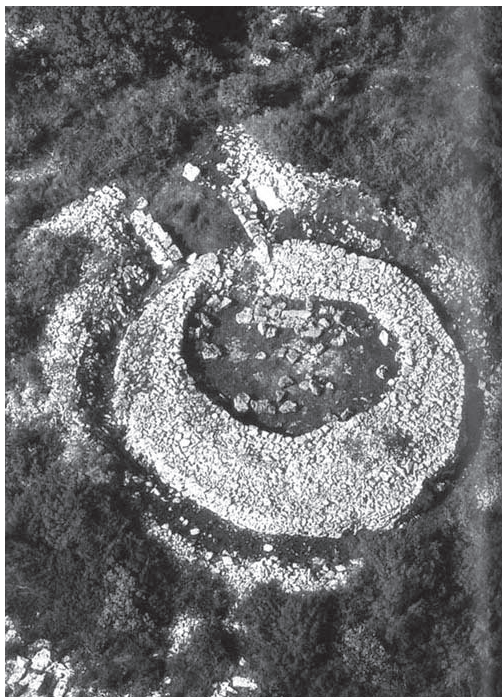


Fig. 1 – Tumulus of Maklavun (Istria).

attributed to the contemporary Cetina-type pottery, at this point I would not even attempt to make any suggestions in regard to the relations and possible contacts of this area and the Cetina Culture. Similarly, although the tumulus at Maklavun (*fig. 1*) obviously contained an exceptionally elaborate and unusual construction, based on the remaining constructional elements, I would still not readily accept recent interpretations of that monument being an extremely rare (if not the only) example of the Aegean-type *tholos* outside Greece (Hänsel, Teržan 2001; Teržan, Hänsel in this volume). However, taking in consideration that many such interesting monuments in Istria remain unexcavated, I would leave this discussion open.

Towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age and in later periods, tumuli in Istria give way to stone cist burials in the immediate vicinity of, or even within, the fortification structures of dominant prehistoric settlement centres such as Nesactium (Mihovilić 2001) or Monkodonja (Buršić-Matjašić 1998), which obviously took over central roles in the control of the landscape.

MOUNTAIN REGION (LIKA)

The situation in Lika, the most representative of the mountainous regions of Croatia, is somewhat different. The earliest known mounds are a group of eight Early Bronze Age tumuli located near Lički Osik. They contain skeletal graves of a very specific structure: the deceased are buried in a supine position within carefully constructed stone cores which were then covered by earthen mounds. The spatial organization of this necropolis in two parallel rows also suggests that they had some sort of important role in landscape organization. Beside that, these burials contained some unique finds such as the axe of the Křtenov type (Drechsler-Bižić 1975), which is extremely important in terms of long distance contacts since this is the most southern find of this type without any parallel in neighbouring regions.

The overall picture suggests that this group of mounds is some kind of exception within the general framework of the Early and Middle Bronze Age in this area. Discovery of the famous cave necropolis in Bezdanjača (Drechsler-Bižić 1980) which is dated into the Middle Bronze Age also supported such hypotheses.

However, another necropolis with six mounds was discovered in Pavlovac Vrebački. Although those graves yielded few or no finds, their specific construction suggests that they belong to the same group as the tumuli near Lički Osik. Furthermore, field research and revision excavation established that a sword of the Sauerbrunn type previously discovered on the outskirts of the town of Gospić also belonged to a devastated warrior grave in a tumulus of the same type (Drechsler-Bižić 1983, p. 246-248).

It seems that, although these mound burials were not the general burial custom in this area, they were a well established category of burial monuments with a specific meaning. This semantic content was communicated on a visible level within the landscape while their relation to the social and spiritual life of the local communities remained invisible, although it must have been important. This is underlined by the rare but exceptional finds discovered in those graves, which must have belonged to some kind of (probably warrior) elite.

Their specific position in the karstic fields made them very vulnerable to the continuous and significant change in land use which often had a devastating effect on such monuments. On the other hand, it is obvious that there are no settlements in the form of hillforts or any kind of “central places” in their immediate vicinity. It seems that those monuments could be connected with smaller communities that moved around within the landscape, perhaps following transhumance patterns.

A similar situation can be observed in the neighbouring area of Bosnia in approximately the same period. However, the relation between communities practising transhumance and individual monuments or small groups of mounds with elite burials, often with a strong warrior component, was also present in other Balkan areas in the Late Iron Age. This also speaks in favour of the strong sociological component in the impulse that leads to the creation of burial mounds.

In later phases of the Bronze Age, burial mounds become scarcer but there are some indications that in certain Japodic areas they remained in use well into the Early Iron Age (Škoberne 1999, p. 36-37), while in other areas they give way to flat inhumation burials. This process coincides with the formation of the Japodes as a strong ethnic and cultural entity with several geographically separated power centres. Those centres demonstrate some individual features in their cultural development and burial mounds might be one of them.

NORTHERN CROATIA

Palaeoecological multidisciplinary research and contextual analysis which has to a much larger extent been applied to Late Bronze and Early Iron Age sites in continental parts of Europe (as well as in Croatia), provide data which are more in favour of “transformation models” for the introduction of burial mounds. Even these limited results indicate that we are dealing with far more complex processes than we have been ready to accept so far.

Perhaps the Budinjak Group, located on the western Croatian border north of the Japodic region, provides a good illustration of such a process. It demonstrates a very close connection with the Dolenjska (Lower Carniola) Group in neighbouring Slovenia but the most important characteristic of this group is the immense variation in burial ritual which has been categorised into ten general types (Škoberne 1999, p. 19-40). These types reflect the chronological evolution of burial ritual from the Late Bronze Age Urnfield Culture manifestations (single cremation burials in urns in flat ground) to the late phases of the Early Iron Age skeletal burials on flat ground. Burial mounds dominate the central part of that chronological scheme in a variety of combinations: single and multiple cremation burials, a combination of cremation and skeletal burials, single and finally multiple skeletal burials. The last form is closest to the large clan tumuli of Lower Carniola which could contain several dozen burials but never quite reaches such a large number of burials. It seems that in this case we are dealing with some sort of social limitation which prevented this community from going a step further from these, so called, family tumuli (Škoberne 1999, p. 35) and reach full scale clan tumuli such as those from Lower Carniola.

Beside Budinjak, the early appearance of tumuli within the framework of the Early Iron Age is observed only in the Karlovac area. Several tumuli at the site of Duga Gora contain multiple skeletal graves (such as those from Budinjak or Lower Carniola) with the important exception of a single urn grave and skeletal grave under the same tumulus. The material from these tumuli suggests dating to the late Ha B and early Ha C periods (Balen-Letunić 1986).

On the other side, the cemeteries of the Kaptol group located further north and east of the Budinjak Group, in Slavonia and Northwestern Croatia, with earth mounds covering cremation burials, appear in fully defined form in a developed phase of the Early Iron Age. Although they fit well within general framework of the Eastern Hallstatt Culture, they demonstrate some specific features. The size of those tumuli varies from really gigantic proportions (tumulus Gomila in Jalžabet [fig. 2] is one of the biggest mounds of that kind in Central Europe) to those with a diameter of barely several meters. Burnt human remains were sometimes put in urns, while in other cases they were just heaped among grave goods. It seems that in most cases the grave goods and human remains were put in some sort of wooden coffin, the size of which may vary from large boxes to very elaborate, monumental chambers. These boxes/chambers in some cases could be covered with more or



Fig. 2 – Tumulus Gomila near Jalžabet (view from the excavation of tumulus 2) (Photo: M. Šimek).

less complex stone constructions (*fig. 3*), thus forming the inner construction of the mound, which was then covered with earth. Most of tumuli were constructed for single burials but there are cases of confirmed multiple burials.

Regardless of the size of related settlements (and, consequently, population size) the cemeteries of this culture are relatively small (30-40 mounds). This is a good illustration of the exclusivity of this burial form which is more or less present in all Early Iron Age communities in this region of Europe. Despite the fact that tumuli are accepted as one of the most distinctive features of the Hallstatt Culture, the burial ritual practiced by the vast majority of the population remains unknown. Although tumuli of the Kaptol group usually contain diverse and sometimes rich sets of grave goods, they cannot provide a good definition of the exclusive group of people buried under the mounds. These graves are not a simple reflection of social structure. The semantic value of the items buried within those burial mounds is obviously much more complex. Systematic analysis reveals that at least some categories of the objects discovered in those graves (weaving utensils, weapons, horse gear, etc.), probably act more on a symbolic level than as functional objects owned by the deceased.



Fig. 3 – Excavation of princely tumulus 6 at Kaptol-Gradci (Photo: H. Potrebica).

Just as the appearance of tumuli here can be seen as result of the complex social processes within Hallstatt communities in this area, their abrupt disappearance in the middle of the 6th c. B.C. could also be explained as a result of internal changes. The rare excavations of settlements suggest that life continues in at least some of the Early Iron Age centres in this area. It seems that, although we cannot altogether discard other explanations (such as the various “disaster” theories involving extensive Scythian raids and/or some kind of plague spreading through Pannonia), external factors could only reinforce internal reasons for a sudden termination of burial mound practice, which, in a way, reflects the sudden shift in landscape policy of the communities in question.

Burial mounds are generally not known in the area east of the Požega Valley. Only in the vicinity of the Danube in eastern Slavonia, as well as in the area of Baranja, are there reports on several groups of tumuli which have never been excavated and their cultural and chronological determination is still unknown (Vinski-Gasparini 1978, p. 144). While the tumuli at Baranja in the vicinity of Batina perhaps belong to the local Early Iron Age communities, the tumuli in eastern Slavonia, which is the area of the Early Iron Age Dalj Culture, remain a mystery, especially when we know that characteristic burials of this culture are flat cremation graves.

After a huge temporal hiatus, burial mounds reappear in Northern Croatia in the Roman Period, in the form of the Noricum-Pannonian type of tumuli. This type of Roman tumuli is characteristic of eastern Austria, Western Hungary, Slovenia, and North-western Croatia. These earthen mounds are of smaller dimensions (5-18 metres in diameter), and contain one or more cremation graves which are dated from the 1st c. to the first half of the 3rd c. A.D. At present, almost 300 such tumuli have been located in Croatia and around 20% excavated (Gregl 1990, p. 101).

MOUNDS AND THE LANDSCAPE

Regardless of the model of their emergence, burial mounds certainly had an important role, through notions of identity and continuity, in claiming, gaining and preserving control over the landscape for the communities which built them. While the Bronze Age mounds on the Adriatic islands, on the coast, and inland offer only a basic distinction in terms of power structure because of their limited content of material, the Iron Age tumuli of continental Croatia reflect a highly structured and hierarchical society where concepts such as of social status, gender, social role and perhaps age, played an important role.

The distribution of burial mounds sometimes indicates intricate and meaningful schemes in which elements of the physical and mythological landscape probably overlap. Since the settlement stands as the focal point in the physical landscape from an archaeological point of view, the “polis-necropolis” relationship often provides the key to understanding distribution patterns (*fig. 4*). In many cases, especially at Iron Age sites, tumuli are located along the road that leads to the settlement or at the very entrance to the settlement, perhaps as monuments to the power and glory of dead heroes and ancestors, which anyone who approaches is bound to perceive before reaching the power of their living successors (Potrebica 2004, p. 123).

Regardless of their content and distribution in the landscape, their very presence is a sign that a power structure is emerging from the social structure and imposing itself on the landscape. It is especially true of the areas where the overall number of burial mounds clearly does not correspond to the size and chronology of settlements related to those necropoleis. In these cases it is obvious that only selected categories of the population, which were important and perhaps the only functional elements of the social structure, were buried under mounds while others, using some other burial ritual, remain “invisible” (or at least less visible) in the landscape.

Obviously, the main feature of burial mounds is their visibility. They act as landmarks and beside their internal function within the burial ritual they also have an external function in the conscious formation or organization of the landscape within a certain symbolic structure (Potrebica 2004, p. 119). Burial mounds were either perceived as artificial landmarks that established control over a certain area or marked important territorial division (*fig. 5*), or as burials of important ancestors which functioned as important features in the religious system of the local community and also as contact points between their physical reality and its mythological counterpart.



Fig. 4 – Aerial view of the site at Kaptol: A) necropolis Gradci, B) necropolis Čemernica.



Fig. 5 – Tumulus at Tulnik overlooking the Požega Valley (Photo: H. Potreblica).

Such burials determine the social and political as well as the operational and symbolic religious presence of the community within the landscape and serve to establish a sense of the actual and/or conceptual continuity of the community, thus reinforcing their legitimate presence in that area. Therefore, the key to understanding burial mounds lies within the living community and not the dead individuals buried under them. However, in this way burial mounds easily become a key factor in the definition of the relationship between a society and its territory, and the focal point of the organization of space within the landscape (*fig. 6*). They are recognized as such and incorporated into all aspects of the life of every community living in that area, regardless of whether those people raised the burial mounds, used them, or put them to all kinds of secondary use. In this way, monuments of the dead determine the living space of the living.

The sheer presence of such dominant landscape features forced later communities to relate to them and, indirectly, to their creators. Not only that, they represent the power and glory of heroes and ancestors, which, by such means, remain physically present in the landscape but also implicate the power of their current successors. Accordingly, in order to gain control over the same area, another community would have to erase or in some way adopt those landmarks. This brings into focus another important element related to the continuity and transformation of burial mounds, which is the politics of their use and re-use in the periods following their initial construction.

Regardless of whether they were actively used or reused for any purpose in that particular period, the local community had to interpret their meaning and, thereby, reinvent them in their own social context so that they could become active elements in the organization of their own landscape. The adoption process is not always reflected in material features. Sometimes it is limited to the sphere of mythology and can be traced in names given to the monuments by local communities. Such names are attempts at reinterpretation and, at the same time, at an incorporation of these landmarks in their cultural framework. Successful incorporation of an originally alien landmark into the mythology of a local community establishes a link with the ancient monument, thus increasing the community's stability and control of the area dominated by the monument. By adopting the monument in their mythology, they themselves become adopted into a historical sequence, not as imposters but as rightful heirs.

Secondary burials within or on burial mounds, as well as the construction of sanctuaries at such locations, are a reflection of the power structure that is imposed over the landscape, incorporating landmarks of their predecessors as their own. Since I have already addressed this problem in more detail elsewhere (Potrebica 2004, p. 123-125), I will just mention two basic forms of such intervention.

The first category implies that individuals buried within the same mounds belong to the same community regardless of the time that passed between the individual burials. This relationship might be based on different criteria which could but does not have to be biological or ethnic. In this case the main criteria for continuity of the community is the continuity of settlement, which means that the relationship between the people buried within the mounds and contemporary society is mainly based on social aspects. Perhaps consecutive burials in these monuments reflect an effort to establish an ancestral link with the primary buried hero and in such way to reinforce the notion of the continuity of the community in general. However, in these cases we have to be careful not to confuse this feature with clan or family burials which are in some communities the "legitimate" or canonical form of burial mound.

Within the second category are those burials which demonstrate a sequence of culturally and/or ethnically different communities in the same area. Perhaps it is even more interesting in the cases where we can establish a large time span between the periods of use of such monuments, and consequently a much larger gap between the primary constructors and secondary users of burial mounds in terms of their ethnic, social, cultural and religious backgrounds. It seems that in such cases the need to impose a new context on pre-existing monuments increases significantly. An excellent example of this is the interaction between Christianity, as the fundamental marker of medieval and later communities, and pagan material and/or the conceptual content of burial mounds (*fig. 7*).

However, the interpretation of burial mounds is much more complex than this and defies simple categorization. In certain cases burial mounds are used in several different time sequences, each time reflecting a different concept. Some mounds in Dalmatia perhaps could demonstrate the whole sequence of burial mound use in the coastal region because they cover two stages (the Early and Late Bronze Age) of stone-cist burials with consequent mound enlargement, followed by elaborate Late Iron Age chamber



Fig. 6 – Stone mound at Župa Rajčevića above the coast south of Dubrovnik (Photo: D. Perkić).



Fig. 7 – Church of St. Nicolas (11th c. A.D.) built on a tumulus near Nin.

burials incorporated within stone mounds, ending with medieval stone cist burials in already somewhat degraded mounds. While the medieval burials can easily be described as examples of a previously defined form of secondary burials, the interpretation of Bronze and Iron Age burials is not so clear. The obvious chronological hiatus between each of the prehistoric burial sequences may reflect reuse of the primary monument by a temporally and culturally different population. However, it could also be the result of a change in the burial ritual of the local population which continuously resided in the area and made conscious shifts between forms of burial caused by external or internal factors. Reuse of the burial mound in that case would be the result of the “resurfacing” of the ancient or “re-establishment” of a similar landscape ideology and/or mythological and eschatological concepts within the same community.



Fig. 8 – Landscape with stone mounds.

The problem of very poor research, which is common in all areas with visible burial mounds, is unfortunately emphasized in the karstic regions of Dalmatia and inland by specific forms of agriculture, where stone mounds resulting from field clearing are virtually identical to those containing actual graves.⁵ Regardless of the primary impulse for their construction, these mounds should not be easily discarded as a source of archaeological data. According to the logic of their construction, they are always on spots or areas which are, for different reasons, hardly usable for pasture or agriculture. Such spots might comprise bulky architectural remains or even earlier burial mounds. On the other hand, primarily agricultural mounds can at some point in history become the preferred burial ground for various environmental reasons, land division issues, or simply because of their prominent position in the landscape. This is probably the case with at least several medieval graveyards in this area.

We have to bear in mind that there were also reverse processes in the course of history – many mounds were partially or completely deconstructed for different purposes such as the construction of buildings, roads or walls. These processes have been more common in modern periods with general and, sometimes, abrupt changes in land use policy or land division.⁶

The result of all these processes is the creation of extremely complex and dynamic historical landscapes marked by mounds (*fig. 8*). They incorporate mounds both for purposes of agriculture and burial, sometimes with both aspects overlapping on the same monuments (sometimes even several times) in different historical periods. We also have to be aware that almost identical mounds come from several archaeological periods – in the case of the Croatian coast and its immediate hinterlands, probably from the beginning of the Bronze Age to the Roman occupation. The situation is even more complicated with the reuse of such monuments, even if we limit this use just to the purposes of burial. We also have to be aware that a certain number of mounds was destroyed and thus rendered invisible in the landscape, for a number of different reasons in different historical periods.

5. V. Barbarić recently completed a systematic study on this problem (see Barbarić, this volume).

6. Some recent research into the impact of modern land-use on burial mounds has been published as a part of the Adriatic Islands Project (Gaffney *et al.* 1997; Stančić *et al.* 1999; Kirigin *et al.* 2006).

There is no simple functional or historical explanation for burial mounds. Obviously, they had a complex function, which changed over the lifespan of the monument (sometimes even several times) and which could significantly shift after the moment of creation, throughout the period of its active use or re-use as a burial monument or any other kind of monument. It is also my opinion that research into burial mounds, especially where it concerns their content, should be accompanied by appropriate research into the settlement as well as landscape patterns. It is the only way to encompass all or at least most of the aspects necessary for a thorough interpretation.

All in all, regardless of their different geographic, chronological and cultural backgrounds, burial mounds in Croatia provide a very interesting insight into the historical processes of the emergence, establishment and reinforcement of social power from prehistory down to the present day.

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THE EMERGENCE AND THE ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TUMULUS BURIAL CUSTOM IN NW GREECE (EPIRUS AND THE IONIAN ISLANDS) AND ALBANIA AND ITS CONNECTIONS TO SETTLEMENT ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

During the post-war era, excavations of tumuli constituted the bulk of our knowledge of Albania's prehistory, as attested by the large number of these burial monuments known so far. In contrast, the numbers of tumuli in NW Greece seems to be limited.

In the Ionian Islands the earliest tumuli (Leukas-R Graves) are erected at the end of EH II, in Northern Albania at the end of the local EBA (1900/1800 B.C.), in Central Albania (chronologically) at the end of MH, while in southern Albania and Pogoni in mainland Epirus in 12th c. B.C. At Ephyra, at the estuary of the Acheron river, the first tumulus is erected during LH IIIA. This paper aims to pinpoint the emergence of these burial monuments in Albania and NW Greece and their main architectural features, while attempting to describe their architectural development both in space and through time. Finally, an attempt will be made to connect tumuli with settlements and to analyze, wherever possible, their role in the formation of a cognitive landscape in the minds of their builders.

INTRODUCTION

The archaeology of Albania, especially after the Second World War, was centred on the research and excavation of tumulus burials. Their visible presence, as architectural structures and their wide distribution across the whole country converted this specific burial custom into the most significant symbol of Albanian archaeology.¹ The tumulus was associated, either correctly or incorrectly, with all vital archaeological questions of the pre- and proto-historic civilization of Albania, from the crucial question of ethnogenesis in local archaeology to the relations between the neighbouring cultures. Currently, the almost 300 tumuli, partly or systematically excavated or merely located, are considered the main purpose of Albanian archaeology, contrasting to the data of Epirus and NW Greece, where tumuli are located in the Gormos river valley (in the region of Pogoni) and in the prehistoric fortified settlement of Ephyra.

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1. Kurti 1978, p. 313-314; Prendi 1988, p. 32.

GEOGRAPHY (*Fig. 1a, 2e*)

Albania can be divided into three distinct vertical geographical zones, which define the environmental and climatological framework, in which the cultural activities were born and developed. A huge, flat area (*fig. 1a: A*), created by alluvial river layers, stretches between the Vlorë Bay and the estuary of the Bojana river, at the Albania-Montenegro border (length: 160km and max. width: 50km). The Drin, Mat and Shkumbin rivers cross the northern part of the plain from east to west (Kavajë plain), whilst the Vjosë, Devol and Osum rivers follow a SW direction in the southern part of the plain (Muzakja plain). This area is a major winter meadow and nowadays is used for the cultivation of cereals, rice and cotton, while the overflowing of the rivers creates marshy areas, which drain only during the summer. Behind the plains lies the wide zone of low hillocks (*fig. 1a: B*), which is crossed by the river valleys, especially in south Albania, forming basins, and is appropriate for the development of settlements. Finally (*fig. 1a: C*), eastern Albania is covered by plateaux (Albanian Alps), while in the southern part of the country cultivable plains and transversal valleys facilitate communication with the West. The region, which consists of the lakes Ochrid and Prespas, in SE Albania (*fig. 1a: D*), is created by alluvial basins (Korçë, Bilisht), which are formed by tectonic crevices. These basins conveyed their waters into the nearby rivers, developing an ecological system suitable for the installation of lake side settlements, practising agriculture and animal husbandry.

Epirus is dominated by five parallel, almost vertical mountain ranges. The highest and most northern is the Pindus range, the natural limit of Thessaly and Macedonia. The passages and routes through these ranges provide the basic routes for continental communication and come to the Vlorë Bay in the North and to the Arta Bay in the south. The long, voluminous rivers, which pass through valleys and precipitous ravines and end at the sea, are considered vital junctions of transactions and interchange, creating plateaux and fertile land, suitable for habitation, while the smaller ones follow the route of the larger and aid the development of appropriate conditions for the practice of agriculture and animal husbandry (*fig. 2e*).

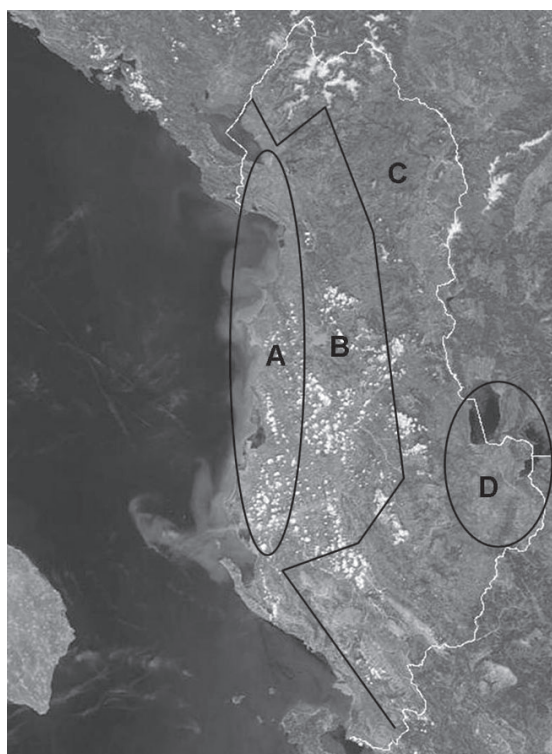


Fig. 1a – The geographical zones of Albania.

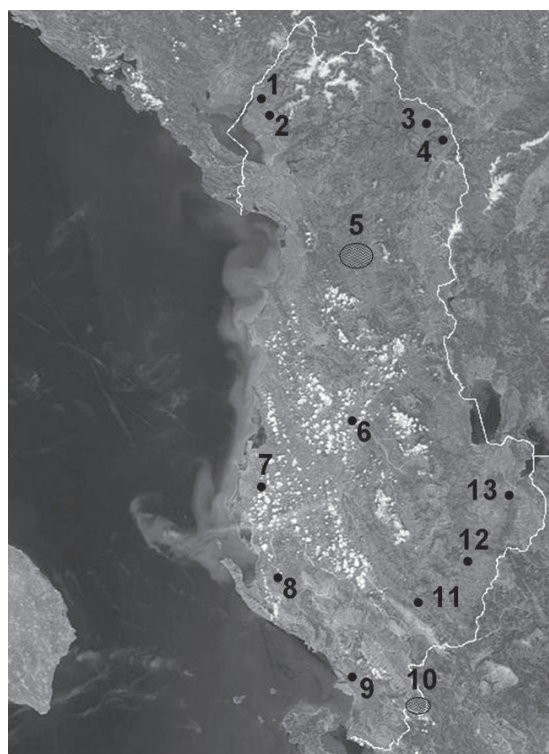


Fig. 1b – Albanian tumulus sites mentioned in the text.

ALBANIA

The use of tumuli in Albania had a long life span. They emerged at the end of the local Early Bronze Age and were in use until the Hellenistic period. It is noteworthy that they were reused during the early medieval movements of the Slav tribes in the SW Balkans.

The earliest tumuli of Albania are dated to the transitional phase between the local Early and Middle Bronze Age (2100-1700 B.C., MH I-II) and are represented by three examples: tumulus 6 at Shtoj (fig. 1c, 1b: I), the Great Tumulus of the Pazhok (fig. 1h, 1b: 6) necropolis in the Shkumbin river valley and the tumulus of Piskovë, in the Permet region (fig. 1b: II). Their typical architectural feature is the central burial or structure, the main core, on which the earth or stony mantle of the tumulus was developed and raised.² Of special interest are the stony ring of the Pazhok tumulus³ and the three rings of the Piskovë tumulus, representing the three successive phases of its use with the inner ring surrounding the central and earliest burial.⁴

Furthermore, over the central tomb of the Shtoj tumulus an oval stone platform of uncertain use with a stone enclosure and a floor made from pressed soil was located, containing six clay violin shaped figurines and covered by a mixed layer of stones and sandy soil.⁵ An architectural overview of the tumulus also reveals a flat hearth with carbon traces and a substantial quantity of sherds (possibly a crematorium).⁶ Of special importance is the pottery of the Cetina phase, found within the central burial of the tumulus (fig. 1c-g, i).⁷

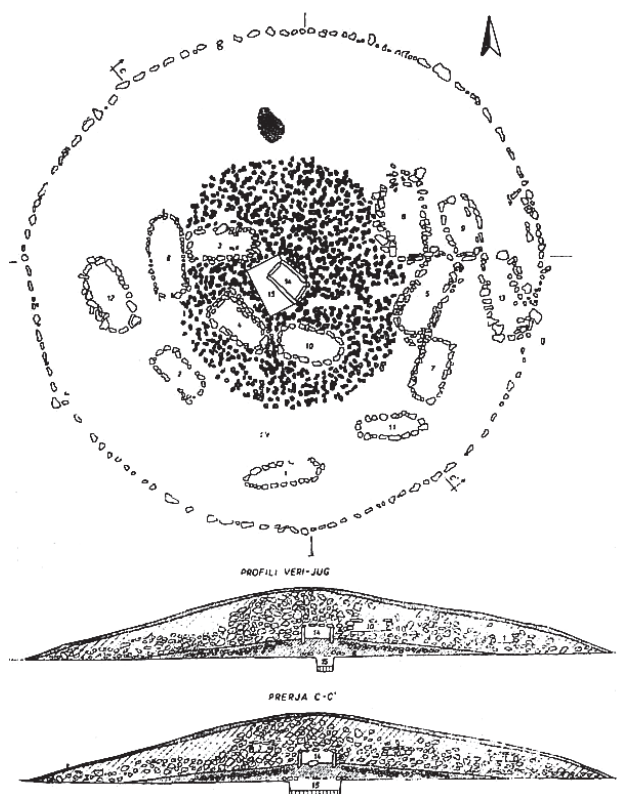


Fig. 1c – Shtoj, Tumulus 6 (Koka 1990, p. 31).

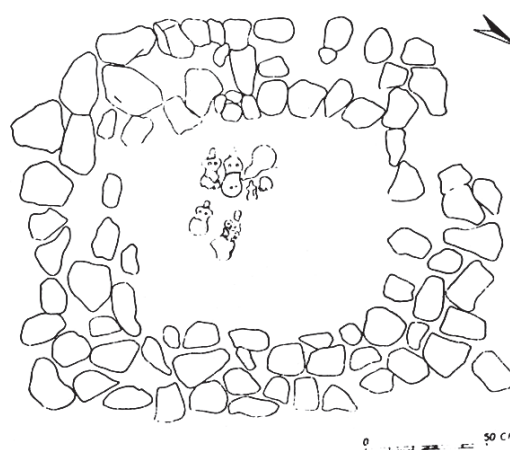


Fig. 1d – Platform with clay figurines, Shtoj, Tumulus 6 (Koka 1985, fig. 7-8; Koka 1990, tab. V).

2. **Shtoj**: Bodinaku 1999, p. 15, fig. 9-10; Koka 1990, p. 28-29, fig. 3; Prendi 1993, p. 20-22, fig. 11; **Pazhok**: Hammond 1967, p. 79; **Piskovë**: Bodinaku 1981, p. 244-245; Bodinaku 1999, p. 12, fig. 1-3.
3. Bodinaku 1999, p. 12-13, fig. 13.
4. Bodinaku 1981, p. 244; Bodinaku 1999, fig. 1.
5. Bodinaku 1999, p. 15; Koka 1990, p. 29, 37-40, fig. 2, pl. VIII.
6. Koka 1990, p. 30-31.
7. Bodinaku 1999, p. 15; Koka 1985, fig. 10.

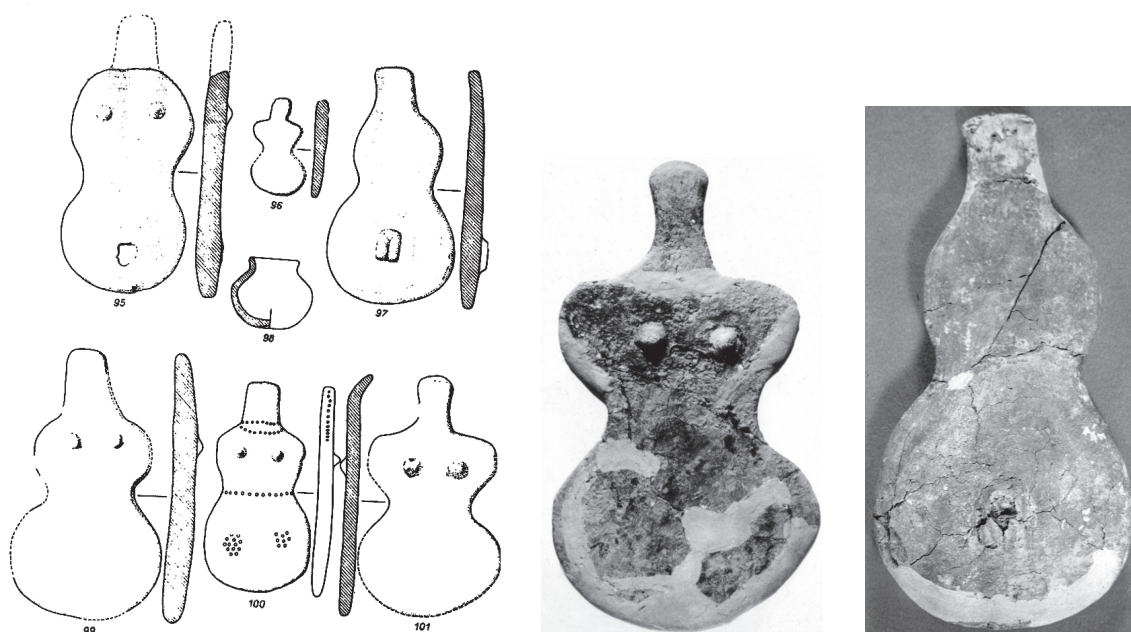


Fig. 1e, f, g – Clay figurines from Tumulus 6, Shtoj (Koka 1985, fig. 7-8; Koka 1990, tab. V).

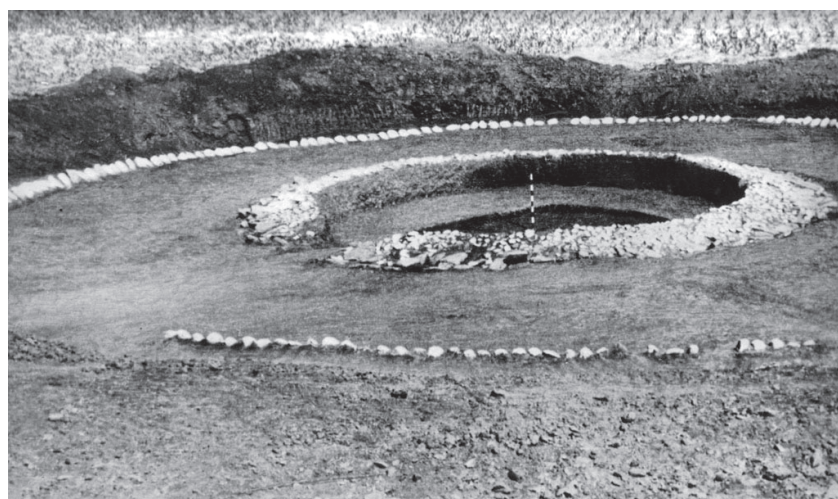


Fig. 1h – Pazhok, Great Tumulus (Koka 1985, fig. 11).



*Fig. 1i – Shtoj, Tumulus 6, Grave 14.
Cetina group pottery (Koka 1985, fig. 10).*

Most of the tombs of the tumuli of this period are cist tombs with slabs⁸ or simple pit graves.⁹ Inhumation is considered to have been the only burial choice, more particularly, within the central burial in the flexed position.¹⁰ As far as the offerings are concerned, pottery constitutes the vast majority of the finds, while a large quantity of sherds is located within the sandy soils of the tumuli, which were sometimes brought from the vicinity. A large percentage of the tombs, around 40%, is without any offering. In some cases, tombs with offerings but without skeletal remains are revealed.¹¹ The primary conclusions in relation to the earliest tumuli are that this custom emerged simultaneously in many regions of Albania with the same basic architectural features, such as the central burial, the rings, the sandy soil and the inhumation. Guesses at specific connections between tumuli and settlements are too risky to be hazarded at, since the archaeological data about the settlements of the Early and Middle Bronze Age in Albania are too limited.

During the local Middle Bronze Age (1800-1500 B.C., Maliq IIIc, MH II-III – LH I), the burial custom of the tumulus expanded all over the country and especially along the Adriatic coastline, where the most characteristic and better excavated four tumuli of Vajzë, in the Vjosë river valley (*fig. 1b: 8*), and some of the eight tumuli of Pazhok (*fig. 1b: 6*), in the Shkumbin river valley are located. The new architectural features include the emergence of *in situ* cremation within the central tomb of tumulus I of Vajzë.¹² The simple pit grave, the cist tomb and the inhumation in supine-flexed position were the main burial choices, while of great significance is the Great Tumulus of Pazhok, where the central and earliest burial is accompanied with an ox-head (bukranium),¹³ and is covered by exclusively sandy soil and defined by a stone ring (*fig. 1h*).¹⁴ This structure is the core to which later tombs with new soil are added, giving the final appearance of the tumulus as a burial monument of many successive phases. During this period, among the offerings of the tumuli of Vajzë and Pazhok are to be found the first finds of Aegean origin, reminiscent of the Shaft Grave period at Mycenae. The Vapheio type cup of LH IIA from Pazhok,¹⁵ the bronze rapiers of Sandars type A,¹⁶ the daggers of Papadopoulos type I¹⁷ and the shoe-shaped, slotted spearheads of Cycladic origin¹⁸ are at the centre of an interesting debate on the nature of the relations between the Aegean World and the western Balkans.

During the local Late Bronze Age (Maliq IIId, LH II-LH IIIC), the custom of the tumulus is the basic burial choice in Albania. Only the open cemeteries of the Early Iron Age at Gërmenj and Borovë¹⁹ are exceptions to this rule. The central burials, especially in SE Albania, for example at Barç and Luaras (*fig. 2a, c, 1b: 13*),²⁰ continue to be at the centre of the burial structure, while cremations, whether *in situ* as in the tumuli of Vajzë A (Grave 12) and Vodhinë (Grave 15, 16),²¹ or not, after the 13th c. B.C., increased in number but were always second choice in comparison with inhumation (*fig. 1b: 8, 10*). For example, in the tumulus of Patos (*fig. 1b: 7*), 34 of the 78 burials are cremations.²² Hearths-crematoria within or outside the

8. Bodinaku 1999, p. 15, fig. 10; Koka 1990, fig. 13-14.

9. Bodinaku 1981, p. 245; Koka 1990, fig. 15; Hammond 1967, p. 79.

10. Bodinaku 1999, p. 15, fig. 2-3, 6, 10; Hammond 1967, p. 79; Koka 1990, fig. 13-15.

11. Koka 1990, p. 33.

12. Prendi 1957, p. 78-79.

13. Bodinaku 1999, fig. 4; Hammond 1967, p. 79, fig. 18: 3.

14. Bodinaku 1999, fig. 5; Hammond 1967, fig. 18: 1-2.

15. Bejko 1993, p. 102-103, 108-109, fig. 2a; Bejko 1994, p. 117-118, fig. 6.1; Bodinaku 1995, p. 259, fig. 1.1; Prendi 2002, p. 90, fig. 2: 9.

16. Prendi 1982, p. 212-214, fig. 6: 1-3; Prendi 2002, p. 92, fig. 2: 1-2; Bodinaku 1995, p. 259, 263, fig. 2.1; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, p. 18-19, pl. 7: 38, 8: 41-42.

17. Prendi 1982, p. 214, fig. 6: 4-5; Prendi 2002, p. 92, fig. 2: 3-4; Bodinaku 1995, p. 263, fig. 3: 1-3.

18. Prendi 1982, p. 214, fig. 6: 11-13; Prendi 2002, p. 90-92, fig. 2: 5-6.

19. **Gërmenj**: Andrea 1981, p. 219-226; **Borovë**: Aliu 1985, p. 271-280; Aliu 1994, p. 5-57.

20. **Luaras**: Aliu 2004, p. 22-30, 67, fig. 21; **Barç**: Andrea 1985, p. 11-12, 48, 246-247.

21. Hammond 1967, p. 83; **Vajzë**: Prendi 1957, p. 85-6; **Vodhinë**: Prendi 1956, p. 185.

22. Korkuti 1981, p. 31-2.

tumuli have possibly been located in the cases of Prodan, Bajkaj and Vajzë.²³ The cist tombs, constructed with slabs, such as those at Vodhinë²⁴ (fig. 2b), or with sides built from river stones, such as those at Krumë and Kënetë²⁵ (fig. 2d, 1b: 3-4), are expanded more and more, coexisting with simple pit graves or pits with a stony contour as in the tumuli of Barç and Patos.²⁶

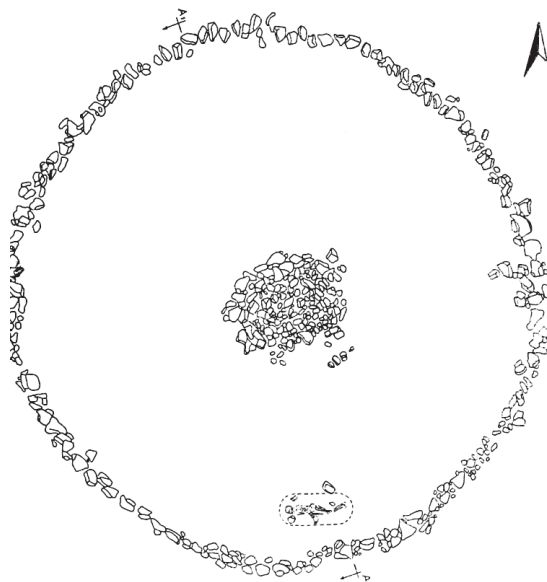


Fig. 2a – Barç, Tumulus I (Andrea 1985, fig. 4).



Fig. 2b – Vodhine, Tumulus I, central cist tomb (Prendi 1993, fig. 9).



Fig. 2c – Luaras, Tumulus section (Aliu 2004, fig. 22).

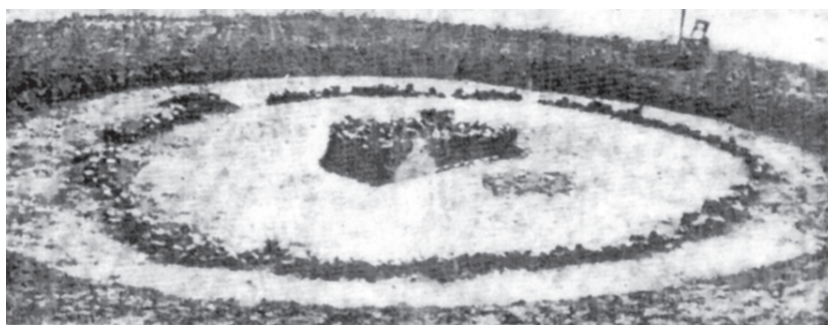


Fig. 2d – Krumë, Tumulus I (Jubani 1982, tab. II).

23. **Prodan:** Aliu 1984, p. 28; **Bajkaj:** Budina 1971, p. 57-66; **Vajzë:** Prendi 1957, p. 92, 95.

24. Prendi 1993, fig. 9.

25. **Krumë:** Jubani 1982, pl. II; **Kënetë:** Jubani 1983, fig. 11.

26. **Barç:** Andrea 1985, fig. 23; **Patos:** Korkuti 1981, fig. 12.

As far as the offerings are concerned, matt-painted pots and a few examples of Mycenaean pottery accompany the large quantity of local handmade pottery,²⁷ whereas the cruciform and horn-shaped Aegean bronze swords,²⁸ the Sandars type 6b knives,²⁹ the central European swords of Naue type II,³⁰ the amber beads, the violin shaped and eight figured fibulae,³¹ the large variation of pins and jewellery (very few gold items from Vajzë, Lofkënd and Barç)³² prove that metallurgy during the transitional phase between the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age had an important role in the formation of local communities as well as in the cultural contacts with neighbouring cultural horizons. Furthermore, the coexistence of burials with and without offerings within the same tumulus possibly shows internal social differentiation but the deficient publications do not make any conclusions easy.³³

The lack of systematic excavations of open or fortified settlements in Albania does not help our understanding of the possible connections between tumuli and settlement organization. Two possible exceptions could be considered here: a) the case of the extended unfortified settlement of Dedaj in the Shkodra region, which judging from the similar archaeological material and the short distances between the tumuli, could be connected to the tumuli group of Shkrel (*fig. 1b: 2*),³⁴ b) the case of the archaic tumuli of Apollonia connecting to the famous Greek colony of the Adriatic coast.³⁵ Obviously, the impressive increase in the number of fortified settlements on the top of hillforts or mountains and the simultaneous wider expansion of tumuli built on the slopes of the same mountains during the transitional phase between Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age³⁶ prove the possible connections between the chosen space for spending one's life and the chosen space for death. More systematic research would be able to connect specific tumuli with specific settlements.

Useful conclusions could be drawn about the spot chosen for the construction of a tumulus. The banks and the valleys of rivers are some of the first choices for the development of tumuli cemeteries. The concentration of over 50 tumuli in the Mat valley (*fig. 1b: 5*), the tumuli of the Vjosë and the Drin river valleys (Kënetë, Krumë, Bardhoç, Çinamak) are the most characteristic examples of numerous neighbouring tumuli (*fig. 1b: 1-5, 9-10*). The fewer tumuli at Pazhok, Vajzë and Barç follow the same rule as the river valleys. Noteworthy is the fact that for the construction of the tumuli, materials are used from the river environment, like alluvial soil or river stones. In the case of the Lofkënd tumulus in the Mallakastër plain, the chosen spot dominates the region due to its height and the tumulus is the most visible monument in the region from all the cardinal points.³⁷ The occurrence of bitumen in some graves could connect the population buried within these tumuli with the exploitation of the neighbouring bitumen mints.³⁸ Furthermore, the placing of the Kakavi and Bodrishtë tumuli precisely along the natural passage of the Vjose valley shows that the choice

27. Prendi 2002, fig. 3.

28. Prendi 1982, p. 220-2, fig. 11: 1-5; Prendi 2002, 93, fig. 4: 1-5; Bodinaku 1995, p. 263, fig. 2-8; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, p. 45, 47, 49, pl. 13: 67, 16: 83-84, 19: 104, 21: 109.

29. Prendi 2002, p. 93, fig. 4: 6-10; Prendi 1982, p. 224, fig. 6: 7-10; Bodinaku 1995, p. 263, fig. 3: 5-6, 8, 10.

30. Prendi 1982, fig. 12: 1-7; Bodinaku 1995, p. 267, fig. 4; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, p. 95-96, 98-100, pl. 34: 231, 35: 233-234, 38: 251-253, 39: 254, 265, 40: 269-272.

31. Aliu 2002, p. 225-8, fig. 8; Koka 1985, fig. 66, 69, 70, 86, 87, 97-101, 111; Aliu 2004, p. 112-5, 126-7, fig. 70; Prendi 1982, p. 228, fig. 13: 7, 8, 9, 12; Harding, Hughes-Brock 1974, p. 153, 167.

32. Koka 1985, fig. 66, 69, 70, 86, 87, 97-101, 111; Prendi 1982, p. 226, fig. 13: 1-11; Aliu 2002, p. 228, fig. 9: 2-3; Papadopoulos *et al.* 2007, fig. 16.

33. On the last notions about the possible social identities in the case of the Albanian tumulus, see Bejko 2002; Bejko 2007.

34. Jubani 1995, p. 54-55.

35. Amore 2004, p. 307-310.

36. Çeka 1972, p. 6-8; Karauskaj 1977, p. 21; Korkuti 1982, p. 235-253; Bejko 2004, p. 39-40; Prendi 1982, p. 203; Lera *et al.* 2009, p. 336-339.

37. Papadopoulos *et al.* 2007, p. 105-108, fig. 3-4; Papadopoulos 2006, p. 75-79, fig. 1-3.

38. Papadopoulos *et al.* 2007, p. 123-124, fig. 20.

of the site is related sometimes to the control of natural necks and passes.³⁹ Unique is the case of the four tumuli of Vajzë, which are set, in orientation with the four cardinal points, at the four corners of a rhombus, thereby drawn in the landscape.⁴⁰

It is obvious that the tumulus as an architectural choice and burial choice is accompanied by a specific and special signification to the local communities. The fact that the most central tombs are simple pits, sometimes without any offerings or even completely empty, while the remaining ones are better constructions and full of offerings, show that the interest of the societies was focused on the image of the tumulus as an architectural totality and not on what was beneath each tumulus. It was a structure built in order to be seen and admired by the locals, especially during the period of its wider expansion, the transitional phase between the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. The importance of the monument originated from its nature as a final structure, which is visible and sovereign in the natural environment in order to define the vital space of specific populations and to connect them with the space of their past and their ancestors. The visibility of the tumuli was achieved by two methods: first, by the choice of special sites for their raising, either along natural travel routes, river valleys, plateaux and plains, thereby being a dominating part within the natural environment, and secondly, with the accumulation of the sandy or stony soil, which gives the final height to the monument.

Noteworthy cases are Shkrel, Krumë and Kakavi where the tumuli contain only one central burial and either no other tombs or very few (a maximum of 2 to 3 tombs), while at the same time their diameter is over 10m, giving the impression that they cover more tombs (*fig. 2d*). Therefore, the size and the relationship between the number of the tombs and the diameter of the tumulus is evidence supporting the notion that the tumulus of Albania is a monument constructed from the beginning to be tall and visible and not only to cover whatever is hidden below. The tumulus seems to be erected in order to signify the relationship of a living community to the past and to function as the point of meeting and pride of the local societies and simultaneously their main means of social competition and exercise of their efforts to secure their ancestral claims over the earth.

EPIRUS (*Fig. 2e*)

Tumuli in Epirus first appeared in the LBA and remained in use until the 3rd c. B.C., although they never became the main type of burial monument. So far they are found in only two areas, Ephyra and Pogoni.

Ephyra (*fig. 2e: 1*),⁴¹ a LH IIIA-C coastal citadel surrounded by two successive walls of cyclopean masonry, had a contemporary cemetery of three intramural tumuli (A-Γ), with diameter ranging from 9-13.5m (*fig. 3a*). They all had dry-stone ovoid enceinte 1-1.5m in width. The graves were mostly simple pits with one or two burials. An interesting feature of tumulus Γ was a semi-circular stone wall surrounding a built tomb-ossuary cist containing one primary and 13 secondary burials, and two simple pit graves. The tumuli contained adult burials of both sexes, as well as child burials and yielded a mixture of local, Mycenaean/Mycenaeanizing and Northern artefacts.

The tumuli of the inland region of Pogoni (*fig. 2e: 2*)⁴² cover the following final phases of the LBA and EIA till the 3rd c. B.C. (LH IIIC-Hellenistic Period), while some were reused during medieval times. Adjacent to the Greek-Albanian border, the small valley of Gormos, a tributary of the Acheron River, is scattered with settlement and burial sites, mostly tumuli, which can be found literally in their hundreds. Every settlement is accompanied by its cemetery or cemeteries, consisting of one or several tumuli, sometimes forming clusters. There are small (5-8m in diameter and 1m in height) and large tumuli (10-14m in diameter and 1.5-2m in height). Most are earth-filled and contain 2-30 tombs, often placed in a more or less radial pattern around an empty centre. In one case, to the SW of the settlement of Palaiopyrgos, lies a cluster of

39. Prendi 1959, p. 190-195.

40. Prendi 1957, p. 76-77, fig. 1.

41. Papadopoulos 1987; Papadopoulos, Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2003, p. 20-22; Soueref 2001, p. 70-76, 122, fig. 231; Tartaron, Zachos 1999, p. 61-62; Lera *et al.* 2009, p. 334.

42. Andreou 1982; Andreou 1994; Andreou, Andreou 1999; Andreou 2003.



Fig. 2e – Tumulus sites of Epirus mentioned in the text.

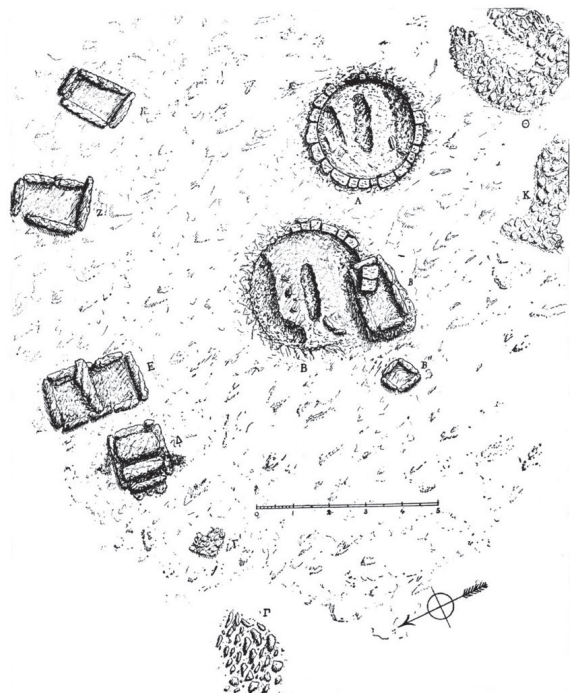


Fig. 2f – Possible tumulus at Kangelisses-Kokkolata, Kephallenia (Kavvadias 1912, p. 247, fig. 1).



Fig. 2g – Messenia, Ayios Ioannis, Papoulia tumulus (Korres 1978, p. 328, fig. 1).



Fig. 3a – Ephyra, Tumulus A (Papadopoulos, Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2003, fig. 28).



Fig. 3b – Pogoni, Meropi. Tumuli cluster at Paliouria, Palaiopyrgos (Andreou, Andreou 1999, p. 86, fig. 39).



Fig. 3c – Pogoni, Meropi, Tumulus Γ (Andreou, Andreou 1999, p. 86, fig. 40, 41).

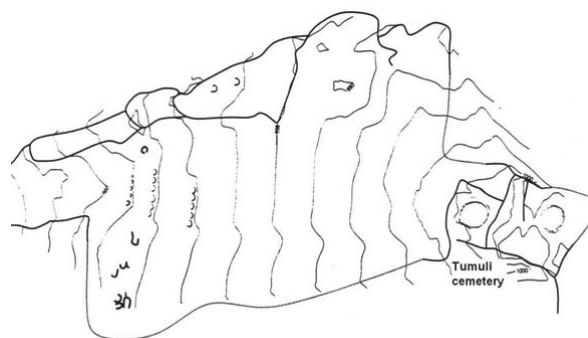


Fig. 3d – Topographic plan of the settlement and tumuli at Paliouria of PalaioPyrgos (Andreou 2003, fig. 7).

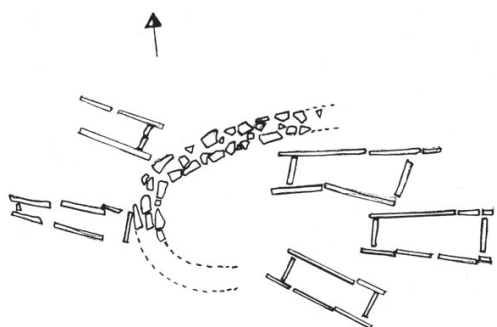


Fig. 3e – Pogoni, Glava tumulus (Andreou, Andreou 1999, p. 80, fig. 9).

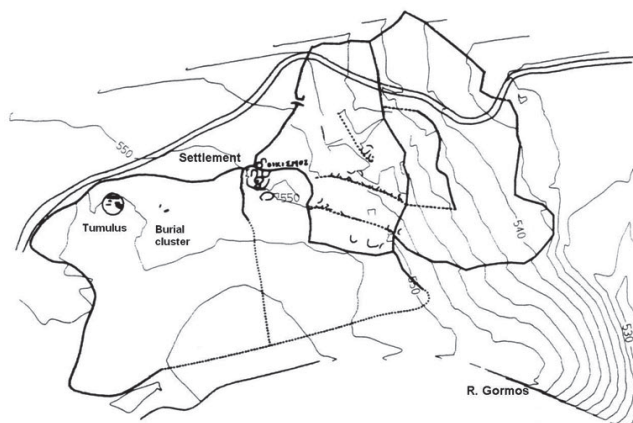


Fig. 3f – Topographic plan of the settlement and cemeteries of Glava, Kato Meropi (Andreou 2003, fig. 1).



Fig. 3g – Pogoni, Meropi, Tumulus B (Andreou, Andreou 1999, fig. 32).

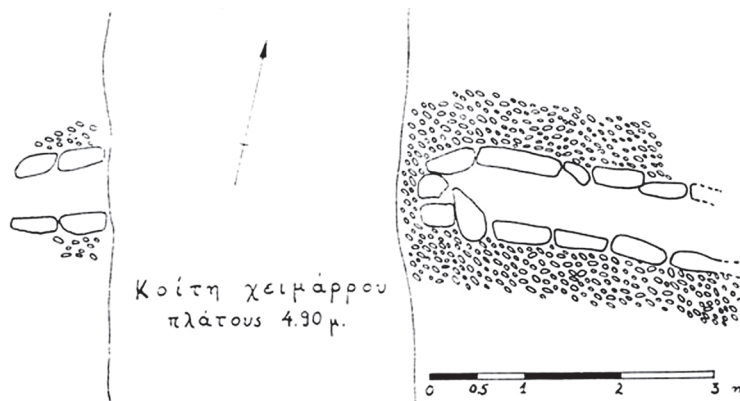


Fig. 3h – Kephallenia, Roupaki (Marinatos 1964).

The vast majority of the graves are the typical Epirotic elongated cists with stone slabs containing a single extended inhumation. Tumulus B, the most ancient tumulus to be identified in the region so far (end of 12th-beginning of 11th c. B.C.) contains more than one deceased in each cist grave and a rich female contracted inhumation in a simple pit. We must also mention tumulus Γ (fig. 3c), within which the oldest tomb is a pit grave followed by the usual cists. The only alleged grave mark is an oblong sandstone slab found in the same tumulus.

Of particular interest is the tumulus of Glava (fig. 3e), which contained rich male and female burials in cist graves, furnished with bronze, gold and bone jewellery, and clay pots. Interestingly enough, the tumulus was erected upon an older apsidal building.⁴³

The epirotic evidence, though not yet fully published, seems to describe a somewhat clearer, but still problematic, picture. Compared to the Albanian tumuli, tumuli in Epirus are generally smaller and lack multiple phases of expansion or central graves and constructions. Furthermore, they are always found in relation to a settlement site, either within the settlement (Ephyra) or in the vicinity.

The latter is the case of the Pogoni tumuli. Settlement sites in this area are found rather close to one another. The topographic plans published thus far (fig. 3d, f) indicate that their tumuli cemeteries are usually located close to the habitation area to the W, SW or S of the community of the living, with which they are sometimes connected and separated by walls enclosing the area of the dead. Tumuli A and B for example are surrounded by such enclosures, which seclude them from each other and from the settlement, while, at the same time, they incorporate them in the constructed space of the settlement, dividing and linking the present to the past through the ancestors, thus marking the ancient territorial rights of the community through their legalization in the ideological sphere.

The tumuli at Ephyra are erected on the acropolis, perhaps influenced by some S Greek examples, such as the Early Mycenaean Peristeria in Messenia and the tholos at Thorikos in Attica.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the question whether the people buried there were part of the ruling elite, and, if so, what was its “ethnic” character, either Mycenaean or local under strong Mycenaean influence, remains unanswered.⁴⁵

Some structural elements of the tumuli of Ephyra, such as the strong dry-stone *periboloi* (enceintes), are a common feature of W Greek EH and MH tumuli.⁴⁶ This is also the case for the multiple (primary alongside secondary) burials in a tomb-ossuary (Ephyra, Tumulus Γ), a central feature of Mycenaean burial customs,

more than 20 tumuli, enclosed by a dry-stone wall 1.80m thick (fig. 3b).

Most tumuli do not have a stone ring, with the exception of Tumulus B, which had a ring of probably orthostatic slabs (fig. 3g). Some tumuli are stone piles covering rectangular or circular dry-stone enclosures without burials. In one case a stone tumulus (tumulus ΣΤ) covered an ovoid enclosure with two child burials.

43. Andreou, Andreou 1999, p. 80, fig. 9.

44. **Peristeria**: Hope-Simpson, Dickinson 1979, no. D200 for references; also Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 42. **Thorikos**: Hope-Simpson, Dickinson 1979, no. F25 for references; also Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 42. Another such case is insinuated for the tumulus at **Makryssia**, Elis (Hope-Simpson, Dickinson 1979, no. B86). At **Mycenae, Grave Circle A** – which is not a tumulus – was incorporated to the *intra muros* area of the citadel after the first expansion of its defensive wall (Iakovidis 1983, p. 29; Plan 5). See also Papadopoulos 1987, p. 141.

45. Andreou *et al.* 1996, p. 593-596; Dakaris 1972, p. 67; Papadopoulos, Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2003, p. 15.

46. **Leukas, S-tumulus**: Dörpfeld 1927; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 70-76, fig. 73; Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 30-31. **Makryssia**: Hope-Simpson, Dickinson 1979, no. B86; Themelis 1968. **Samikon**: Yalouris 1965.

especially in regard to family tombs, both chamber tombs and tholoi. We should mention here the peculiar case of the LH Kissos tumulus in Messenia, which served partly or solely as an ossuary,⁴⁷ and the presence of ossuary cists in some MH tumuli in Messenia and Leukas.⁴⁸ The grave goods, on the other hand, are a mixture of Mycenaean, local imitations of Mycenaean and purely local artefacts.⁴⁹ The Pogoni tumuli, on the contrary, are not encircled by *periboloi* and their main grave type belongs to the Epirotic tradition of the slab cist. The presence of Mycenaean artefacts is extremely limited but this is due to their late date of foundation (final LBA-EIA), when contacts with S Greece where practically terminated. There is, however, a number of very peculiar affinities with some earlier, MH, S Greek architectural features and burial practices:

- *Periboloi* of orthostatic slabs, a rare feature of MH mortuary architecture. They enclose Grave Circles (Mycenae-Grave Circle A) or probable Grave Circles (Kephallenia-Roupaki, *fig. 3h*), and a unique rectangular tumulus (Leukas-*Familiengrab*).⁵⁰ A ring of orthostatic slabs is probably present at Pogoni-Tumulus B (*fig. 3g*), while there is probably a ring of orthostats and gravel stones around the inner tumulus of Pazhok in Albania.⁵¹
- Apsidal or horse-shoe shaped construction in the tumulus. As already mentioned, this is the case with the tumulus of Glava (*fig. 3e*). Horse-shoe constructions appear in the MH tumuli of Ayios Ioannis-Papoulia (*fig. 2g*) and Routsis-Kalogeropoulou in Messenia and Vranas in Attica. Also very interesting is the probable tumulus in Kokkolata, Kephallenia (*fig. 2f*).⁵² This possible tumulus contained MH cist tombs, LH pit-graves or ossuaries, three stone piles, one of which was a horse-shoe construction, and two small tholoi. Intrusive tholoi into an older (EH) tumulus are also found in Voidokoilia and Katouna, a coastal site in the Ambracian Gulf, facing the Epirotic coast.⁵³
- Twin vessels. A rather common grave offering in LBA-EIA Epirus (Pogoni-Tumulus Γ and Glava) and Albania,⁵⁴ twin vessels appear in SW Greek graves from as early as the EH⁵⁵ and continue well into MH (*e.g.* the Routsis-Kalogeropoulos and Voidokoilia tumuli in Messenia),⁵⁶ but are almost absent in LH, when they first appear in NW Greece and Albania.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that the Ionian Islands and Leukas in particular play a key part in the similarities, dissimilarities, synchronisms and chronological differences. The R-graves tumuli cemetery is certainly one of the oldest in Greece⁵⁷ and seems to have strong affinities with the EBA (3rd millennium B.C.) Aegean

47. Marinatos 1966.

48. **Ayios Ioannis, Papoulia:** Korres 1978; **Routsis:** Korres 1989; **Leukas, *Familiengrab*:** Dörpfeld 1927, p. 217; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 71, fig. 73; Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 19, 31.

49. Papadopoulos, Kontorli-Papadopoulos 2003, p. 22, fig. 37.

50. **Pogoni, Tumulus B:** Andreou 1982, p. 58; Andreou 1994, p. 235; **Mycenae, Grave Circle A:** Karo 1930; **Kephallenia, Roupaki:** Marinatos 1964; **Leukas, *Familiengrab*:** Dörpfeld 1927, p. 217; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 71, fig. 73, 75; Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 30-31.

51. Bodinaku 1999, p. 13; Hammond 1967, p. 79.

52. Kavvadias 1912; Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 39-40.

53. **Voidokoilia:** Korres 1978; Korres 1993. **Katouna:** Kolonas 1990; Kolonas 2008, p. 390, fig. 2.

54. **Epirus:** Andreou, Andreou 1999, p. 8: fig. 114a, 85: fig. 35. **Albania:** Aliu 1985, fig. 107, 154; Aliu 2004, fig. 32, pl. XXXIV-XXXVI; Andrea 1985, pl. II: 4, IV: 22, X: 90.

55. **Leukas (R10/R27a):** Dörpfeld 1927, p. 217; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, pl. 13; Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 26; Hammond 1974, fig. 3. Twin vessels appear as early as EHII in chamber tombs in **Achaea** (Vasilogamvrou 1998, p. 375) and EH I in **Elis** (Rambach 2007, p. 67).

56. Korres 1993, fig. 29d, e.

57. For an EBA tumulus in Chalkidiki, Macedonia, see Asouhidou *et al.* 1998; Asouhidou, this volume.

cultures, as well as with the Cetina culture.⁵⁸ Features include the large and carefully constructed central pit-grave, rituals involving the use of fire, the ceremonial breaking of pottery and the offering of animal meat (pigs and ovicaprids) which occur before the erection of the tumulus or at the time of the burial; the grave offerings of the main central burial, which always include metallic artefacts of types found over a vast geographical area, with parallels from the Adriatic to Crete, Cyclades and NE Aegean.⁵⁹ All these features seem to justify hypotheses on the strong ties between the chieftains buried in the R and in the Eastern Adriatic Culture tumuli. Furthermore, the R Tumuli at Leukas and the tumuli of the Cetina culture are strategically placed in areas that control the sea route between the Adriatic and the Aegean along the Ionian coasts.

Some of the features mentioned above are found in Albanian tumuli. They include the central pit graves, the fire rites on stone platforms at EBA Shtoj and the animal bones found in several cases, like Pazhok.⁶⁰ Furthermore, some Cetina and Albanian tumuli are actually double, the inner being the oldest, and expanded over time to become a cemetery. An interesting case of an expanded tumulus is the Messenian tumulus of Ayios Ioannis-Papoulia,⁶¹ which also has a central cairn, a horse-shoe construction and burned animal remains.

It can thus be assumed that, during the EBA and MBA, the tumulus burial custom became widespread throughout the Adriatic and Ionian seas with some common architectural, artistic and ideological characteristics. Elements of those characteristics can be traced in Adriatic, Albanian, Ionian and Western Peloponnesian tumuli, although the chronological relations between those areas are still insufficiently established. Epirus is out of the picture during this period and remains so until the LBA. The tumuli of Epirus seem to have more affinities with southern Greek tumuli and exhibit characteristics that are probably archaizing for LH southern Greece (twin vessels, apsidal/horse-shoe shaped constructions, orthostatic *periboloi*). The Ionian Islands certainly functioned as a key point in the chain of transfer between the north and south of these ideas throughout the Bronze Age.

All the primary conclusions detailed above need the continuity of systematic research and publication in order to provide the scientific community with a gradual solution to the interesting and complicated riddles of the tumulus culture.

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58. See Branigan 1975 and Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999. For the Adriatic connections see Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 155-158.

59. Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 155-158; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2008, p. 153-157; Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 20-25.

60. **Shtoj**: Bodinaku 1999, p. 15, fig. 9-10; Koka 1990, p. 28-29, fig. 3; **Pazhok**: Bodinaku 1999, p. 13, fig. 4-6; Hammond 1967, p. 79, fig. 18.

61. Three successive stone mantles: Korres 1980, p. 149-150.

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THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION AND LOCATION OF BRONZE AGE TUMULI IN GREECE

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ABSTRACT

Funerary tumuli are widespread in Bronze Age Greece. They do not form a homogeneous group but present different morphological characteristics depending on environmental conditions, the deceased's social class, and their date. Tumuli first appeared in the Early Bronze Age in limited numbers and in western Greece only but subsequently spread to central and southern Greece during the Middle and Late Bronze Age. By the end of the Bronze Age, they occurred only in northern Greece.

The placement of tumuli within a landscape does not follow strict rules. Although hilltops are favoured, some tumuli are placed on slopes or plains. They usually occupy an exceptional site near the coast or, inland, near a water source. They can be isolated or within cemeteries, together with cist graves, shaft graves and jar burials. Several are located close to a settlement but a direct link between these two features has not yet been established.

All of the above elements were used to establish a database, the thematic layers of which we are currently processing using GIS technology in order to analyze the spatial distribution of tumuli.

INTRODUCTORY FACTS

A funerary monument visible from a long distance, the tumulus was widespread in Greece from its first occurrence in the Early Bronze Age until Late Antiquity. Its make-up and the type of tombs that it contained (*pithoi*, shafts, cist graves, tholos tombs, chamber tombs) changed through the centuries, with regional variations in different time periods. The morphology of a tumulus depended on the environment and available building materials in each specific area, on the needs and living conditions of a particular group bonded by family ties and on their date.

Because tumuli show much variation, several classifications with morphological, regional and chronological groups have been suggested in the past. The criteria taken into account include the tumuli's structure and characteristics, both external (shape, size of enclosure walls, occurrence, either single or in groups within cemeteries) and internal (fill composition, number, type and placement of tombs, related burial customs).

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There were individual tumuli, raised over a single burial, and family tumuli, containing many burials. The EBA cemeteries at Steno, Lefkas, and Kriaritsi, Chalkidiki, are the only examples of actual tumulus cemeteries in Greece, each numbering several dozens of mounds slightly overlapping one another and thus forming solid rows. Later tumuli appear alone or, more rarely, in small clusters. Groups of at least five tumuli occur at Pighi Athinas, on the eastern flanks of Mount Olympus, and Samiko, and of seven at Gouvalari and Vranas, Marathon. All other instances of grouped tumuli, most of which occur in the Peloponnese, number one to three or four tumuli, with very different morphological characteristics: their circumference may overlap blurring the limits between them or giving the appearance of a single, large, complex tumulus. Recent excavations at Pellana revealed new tumuli, the positioning of which recalls that of Lefkas, although it is too early to draw any secure conclusions.

The relation between the tumuli and their contemporary cemeteries must also be taken into consideration. In some cases, tumuli were included in MH cemeteries along with cist graves, shaft graves and single *pithos* (storage jar) burials. In Messenia, they are directly related to the creation of the later monumental tholos tombs.

There was probably no specific preference for the location of tumuli in the Greek mainland. They were built either in flat areas, as at Lefkas, Samiko, Vranas and Exalofos, or on hills, as at Makryisia. Most often they were raised on hilltops, as at Drachmani, Thebes (Amphieion hill) and various Messenian sites.

Another important factor is a tumulus' situation in relation to the settlement that it served. In several cases the corresponding settlement has not yet been found. Many tumuli stand alone or in clusters near settlements. They are located outside the settlement's enclosure wall but very near it and are built of stone plaques and gravel, an easily accessible building material found near rivers and on beaches. Indeed, all of the known tumuli are located near the sea or rivers, as are many EH and MH settlements.

Because of its stability, duration and visibility, a tumulus was an imposing monument, a kind of public declaration and display. It dominated the surrounding area, defined territorial rights and claims, and reinforced the familial, social, and ethnic ties of the deceased buried inside the same or similar tumuli.

As a foreign element, it was adopted by and assimilated into the local EBA cultural environments and dynamics, possibly through contacts with cultures in the West Balkans and the Adriatic, or because of the arrival of Balkan populations on the Adriatic coast.¹ This suggests the development of a commercial network for controlling access to the metal producing regions or to the circulation networks of metals² and their finished products, and the establishment of small, newly developed social groups at key sites, from where they could trade, these groups being connected through family and economic ties with other local or foreign groups. This may explain the first occurrence of tumuli in sites in Western Greece and the eastern Peloponnese, such as Lefkas, Olympia and Lerna, which served as intermediary stops in various exchange networks embracing the Aegean, Anatolia, the central Mediterranean, the Balkans and the Adriatic.

Symbolism was important for the earlier tumuli, which were often built on hilltops and over earlier settlements, as at Olympia, Thebes, Agios Ioannis Papoulion, Routsis and Peristeria. Often they were placed within important landscapes strategically located on inland and coastal commercial routes, as at Olympia, Voidokoilia and Loutraki.

In the late MH period, construction techniques, rituals and landscape strategies changed dramatically. Strategic location seemed to matter less than the proximity to a settlement. Tumuli were built as part of communal cemeteries or became cemeteries themselves, with many burials placed inside them haphazardly, rather than hierarchically. LH tumuli with their imposing enclosure walls suggest an obvious, as much as an exclusive, connection with select groups according to new ideological dynamics manifest in all aspects of the communities' life.

1. Müller 1989, p. 18; Forsén 1992, p. 237; Müller Celka 2007, p. 186-187; Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 195-200; Artursson, Nicolis 2007, p. 332-333.

2. Müller Celka 2007, p. 186-187. Further investigation on the mining of metals, particularly gold, in mainland Greece and Italy will provide evidence on new networks or ramifications of known networks and their possible connection with the distribution of tumuli in the MH/LH I periods, Giardino, Merkouri 2008, p. 111-116, 120-121.

Inhumation, usually in the foetal position inside burial *pithoi*, cist graves, shaft tombs or tholos tombs was the predominant burial custom. Meagre evidence suggests that inhumation was accompanied by funerary rituals. The use of pyres was probably important not only in the partial or full cremations of the deceased but also in some types of preliminary ritual. Ritual activities centred around central pyres or funerary pyres, as well as large quantities of potsherds, animal bones, charcoal and ash found over tombs, inside the stone piles of platforms or in special *bothroi*, as at Lefkas, in the area of the Olympia Museum, and Pellana, may be connected to symbolic ceremonies that took place inside or around these monumental tombs.

The custom of cremating the deceased and placing their burnt remains in ash urns has been known in Greece since the Neolithic period.³ This custom survived in the BA, particularly in Macedonia, where cremation occurs alongside inhumations in the same cemetery. Among the Macedonian tumuli with cremations, one is dated to the EBA (Kriaritsi in Chalkidiki) and the rest to the LBA and early Iron Age (Potamoi and Exochi near Nevrokopi, Drama); none are known from the MBA.

In the case of burials, ash urns were replaced by burial jars for both children and adults. This practice appears to begin in EH II/III, particularly in the Peloponnese and the west and northwest of the Greek mainland. The evidence for southern Greece is lacking.

BRONZE AGE TUMULI (FIG. 1, 2)

In the EBA the number of tumuli was limited.⁴ Their geographical distribution shows concentration along the west side of central Greece and the Peloponnese, particularly for the earliest examples, such as the cemetery at Steno, Lefkas (beginning of EH II) and those at Moschovi Katouna near Loutraki and Olympia (site of the new museum) (EH III). The recently discovered tumuli at Pellana in Lakonia, Orchomenos in Arkadia and Thebes (museum site), all of which probably date to EH II, show a progression towards the eastern parts of the Peloponnese and central Greece.

Non-funerary tumuli, known as ritual tumuli, also occur in central and southern Greece in the EH II period. These large tumuli, with a diameter of 20-35m, surrounded by a simple line of stones, were identified at Lerna, Olympia-Pelopion, and the Ampheion hill at Thebes. Another small, possibly ritual tumulus was excavated recently inside the EH I cemetery at Tsepi-Marathon.⁵ The origin of ritual tumuli is uncertain but a relation with the two Late Neolithic tumuli at Agia Sofia in Thessaly and, possibly, Magoula Balomenou in northern Boeotia has been suggested.⁶

The difference between ritual and funerary tumuli is not clear or specific. If ritual tumuli did not have a funerary function but were used to mark a particular site, then they might have been the models for the funerary tumuli. Given this possibility it is not surprising that ritual tumuli were found in those areas with a later concentration of funerary tumuli, such as Elis, Attica, Boeotia and the Argolid.⁷ At Lerna the tumulus was raised directly over the remains of the so-called House of the Tiles, which may suggest a voluntary decision and commemorative function. This, however, is not the case at Olympia or at Ampheion, where the tumulus was raised before the partial destruction of Kadmeia. By contrast, some of the earlier burial tumuli, such as those at the new Olympia Museum or at a site adjacent to the Thebes Archaeological Museum, where the remains of an elliptical tumulus of the EH II period were revealed, were raised on destruction levels with traces of fire, over the ruins of a settlement, as at Lerna.

3. Asouhidou 2001, p. 38-42.

4. Olympia-Pelopion, Olympia-New Museum, Steno/R-Lefkas, Loutraki, Thebes-Museum, Thebes-Ampheion, Tsepi, Lerna, Pellana, Orchomenos (Arkadia), Kriaritsi.

5. Müller Celka 2007, p. 180.

6. Karali, Gkioni 2006, p. 75-76.

7. Müller Celka 2007, p. 179.

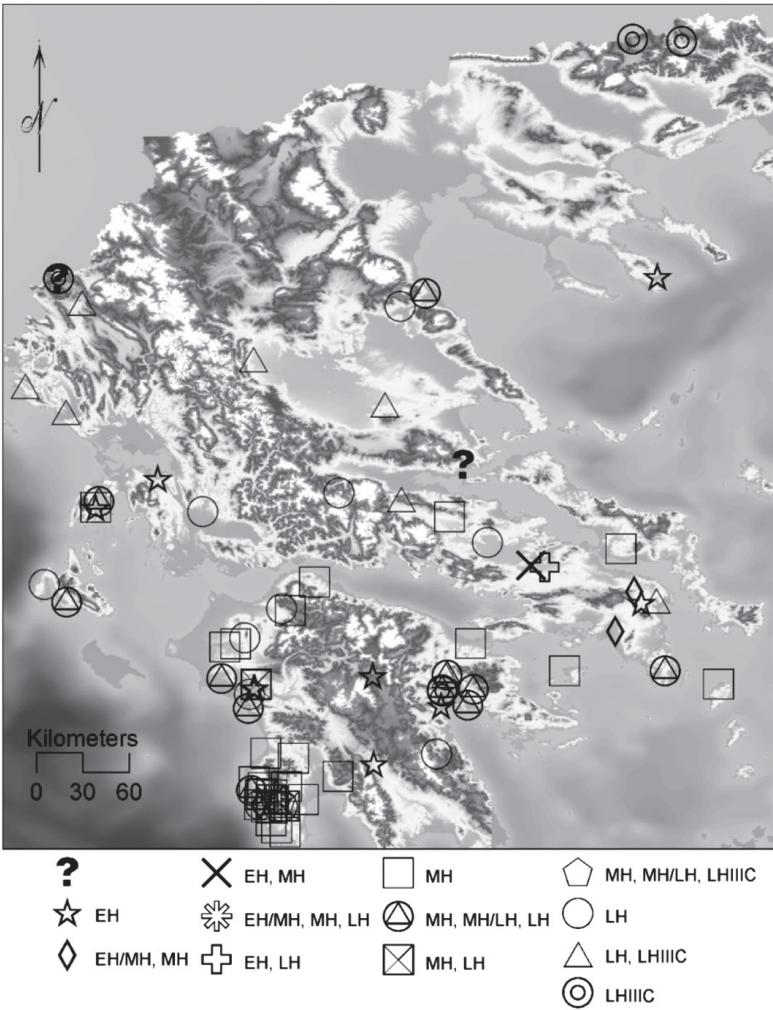


Fig. 1 – Spatial distribution of the 82 recorded tumuli and their date.

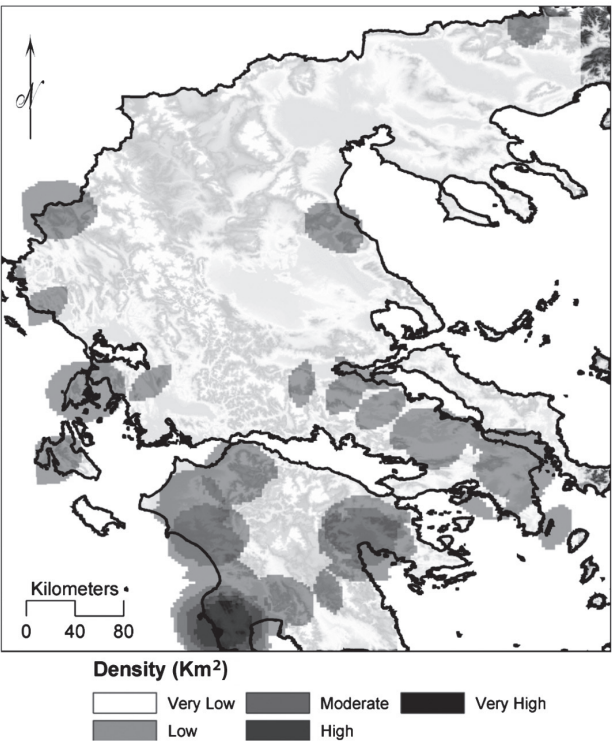


Fig. 2 – Tumuli density.

One or two EH III tumuli that closely resemble some of the Lefkas tumuli were found 400m north of the Altis, on the site of the new Olympia Museum. Traces of fire at the centre of the stone heap, together with *pithos* fragments and burnt bones, suggest incineration inside the jar. The Altis settlement on the Alpheios River, which was navigable for several kilometres, was both a trading post of the Peloponnesian west coast and a starting point for the land route leading into the central and western Peloponnese.

Still on the west coast, but further north, the remains of an EH III tumulus were revealed at Moschovi Loutrakiou Katounas, in the Amvrakikos Bay.⁸ The area is isolated from the mainland by inaccessible mountains but meets all the requirements for the development of a prosperous settlement: natural defences, an exit to the sea, fertile flat land, rivers and springs. Scattered potsherds of the prehistoric period in the flat lands surrounding the tumulus may indicate the existence of a settlement, probably destroyed by recent ploughing. The tholos tomb, which was built in the isolated central part of the tumulus, as well as the foundations of houses and another tholos tomb in the same area, suggest the presence of Mycenaeans, who reached the area from the Acheloos valley.

The hilltop of Palaiokastros at Pellana, at the foot of Mount Taygetos, is thought to have been the site of a cemetery with EH and MH II tumuli and tombs, which were succeeded by cist graves and a huge shaft grave of the LH I-II periods.⁹ A LH settlement and EG jar burials were identified on the hill's southern slope. The EH II tumuli on the eastern terrace of the acropolis are arranged in dense parallel rows like the tumuli at Nidri. Skeletal remains inside jars, ash *bothroi*, vases and stone basins were preserved inside their enclosures.

Lefkas presents the largest concentration of burial tumuli. Thirty-three EH II-III tumuli were discovered at Steno, a site close to the coastal plain of Nidri.¹⁰ There is limited evidence on the situation before the establishment of Cemetery R at Lefkas, which was as a commercial hub on the sea routes connecting the west coast of the Peloponnese and central Greece with the Albanian and Dalmatian coasts. Cemetery R contained approximately 62 burials in mortuary chambers, *pithoi*, cist graves and shafts under tumuli of rocks and earth raised over circular enclosure walls, 2.7-9.6m in diameter. The tumuli were aligned and each new enclosure wall abutted that of the adjacent tumulus.

The tumulus cemetery at Kriaritsi in Sithonia, Chalkidiki, dates from the end of the middle phase to the late phase of the EBA.¹¹ Its structure recalls that of the Lefkas cemetery. The tumulus rises on a relatively low hill, directly on the coast and covers thirty tombs with circular or ovoid enclosure walls. Cremation was the only type of burial and each enclosure contained ash urns. Only partially burnt bones were found at Lefkas.

The use of tumuli became widespread in mainland Greece in the MH period.¹² The number of tumuli rose considerably and significant typological differences appeared. Interestingly, the increasing number of certain and possible tumuli identified during the past decade has not affected their distribution pattern, which remains concentrated in southwest Greece and reaches north only as far as the Spercheios valley.¹³ Because of the absence of grave goods and disagreement over the dating of individual sites, it is difficult to date the tumuli to a particular phase of the MH period. The evidence collected thus far suggests that most date to two intermediate phases: the end of the EH/beginning of the MH periods and the end of the MH/beginning of the LH periods.¹⁴ Many tumuli have been identified in Messenia, Elis, Achaia, the Argolid, Attica and central Greece, all of which have been thoroughly investigated, but a gap exists in the northwest of mainland Greece and southeast of the Peloponnese. Most of them stand on riverbanks or near rivers, near a settlement or atop a nearby acropolis, or, if nothing else, at a distance of no more than five km from a settlement.

8. Alam-Stern 2004, p. 743.

9. Alam-Stern 2004, p. 646.

10. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005.

11. Asouhidou 2001; Asouhidou, this volume.

12. Voidokoilia, Kaminia, Gouvalari, Kissos, Agios Ioannis Papoulion, Routsis, Nichoria, Peristeria, Tragana, Lefki Kaldamou, Kanalos, Pargos Tsouka, Agios Ilias Miloti, Valta Kastraki, Kretharetses, Mesochori, Malthi, Kastroulia, Evangelismos, Yalova, Dhivari, Foinikounta, Pila, Corinth, Mycenae, Dendra, Argos, Asine, Mageira, Samikon, Armatova, Agios Elias, Aghiorgitika, Aravonitsa, Mirali, Athens, Thorikos, Aphidna, Kolonna, Agia Irini, Thebes-Museum, Kamarion, Drachmani, Pighi Athinas, Steno/S-Lefkas, Skaros/S-Lefkas, Kokkolata.

13. Müller Celka 2007, p. 181.

14. Müller 1989, p. 20; Müller Celka 2007, p. 181-182.

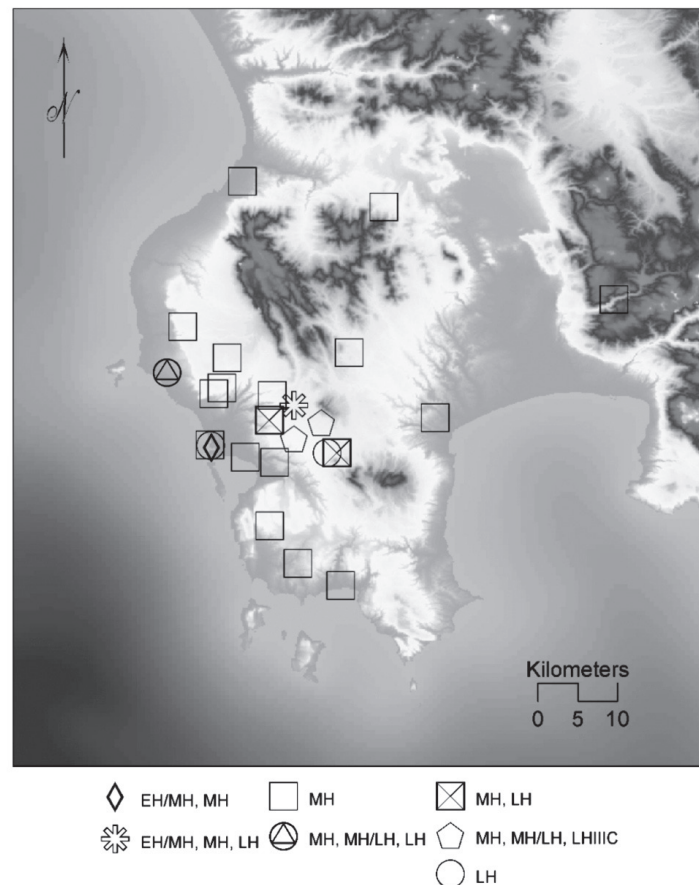


Fig. 3 – The tumuli in Messenia.

Messenia is a special case, with the greatest concentration of MH and LH I funerary tumuli with significant particularities (fig. 3). Evidence exists for certain or possible tumuli at 25 sites, particularly in the wider area of Pylos, Messenia's political centre in the LH period. The precipitous mountain ranges of Kyparissia form a natural boundary and barrier with an east-west orientation, which explains why the central part of this region remained uninhabited. A few new sites appeared along the west coast between Pylos and Kyparissia. The main communication route was the one connecting Navarino Bay via Karpophora with Kalamata and the eastern plains. The population concentrated primarily in the Alpheios valley and the Pylos area, where the soil lent itself to the cultivation of cereals and vines, the primary reason for the establishment of settlements in the MH and LH periods. The population probably preferred coastal regions with access to the Ionian Sea or sites in the interior, on hilltops and hillsides, in important landscapes or plateaus, since difficulty of access provided natural defence. One must also take into account that the Messenian gulf underwent significant tectonic changes. Erosion caused by the sea and the movement of sediments from the hills east and north of Navarino Bay towards the Ionian side of Navarino Bay itself, and the silting of riverbeds towards the bay altered the landscape by creating a plain behind the coast.

There is no evidence for the presence of tumuli in the plains of Thessaly and Macedonia, except for the recently discovered tumuli in Pieria, in the eastern part of Mount Olympus. Also, they do not occur in the islands, on Crete and the Cyclades, with the exception of Agia Irini on Kea, in the western Cyclades, and Kolona on Aigina, where one tumulus was tentatively identified.¹⁵ A few tumuli were raised over EH sites. At Argos, Dendra, Voidokoilia, Agios Ioannis Papoulion and Routsi the presence of a settlement earlier than the tumulus is obvious and it is possible that the site was deliberately chosen.

15. Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997.

Some MH/LH tumuli remained in use during the LH period, in most cases until LH IIIB.¹⁶ Earlier tumuli in use during this period were identified in Messenia, Elis, Achaia, Lefkas, Kephallonia, the Argolid, Attica and Boeotia, whereas new tumuli were built in Arkadia, Kephallonia, Aetolia-Akarnania, and Achaia. The tumuli in the mountainous village of Portes in southwest Achaia, near the border with Elis, which afforded a view towards western Achaia and coastal Akarnania, were of great strategic importance. Although no tumuli are known in Thessaly and Epirus in the MH period, they do appear over tholos tombs from the LH IIIA to the Protogeometric periods.

The tumuli of the end of the BA¹⁷ are related to new phenomena in the regions of Illyria and Thrace-Bulgaria and concentrate in northern Greece (Epirus, Macedonia), with the exception of the late LH IIIC tumuli of Argos.¹⁸ Indeed, not a single tumulus is built in central and southern Greece in the period between the LH II and LH IIIC periods.¹⁹ The tumuli of this period are smaller, often grouped inside cemeteries and cover either ash urns containing cremations or cist graves containing inhumations.

The basic communication axis for the inhabitants of Epirus ran along mountain passes and river valleys, which provided means for subsistence, such as arable land, pastures and ample supplies of water. The valley of the Gormos River, between Mounts Meropi and Koutsokrano, in the region of Pogonion, fulfils these requirements.²⁰ The Gormos valley is studded with large cemeteries of over 45 tumuli, located between the Glava region of Lower Meropi and Stravoskiadi. They date from 1100 B.C. to 400 B.C., but were also used later, in the Hellenistic and Early Christian periods.

The LH IIIC tumuli of the Argolid occupy sites different from the contemporary chamber tombs of Mycenae and Argos. This suggests changes and population movement at the end of the Mycenaean period. In the Argolid, the custom of cremation was fairly widespread, with a total of 53 ash urns found inside tumuli, of which 45 were found at Argos and eight at Chania-Mycenae.²¹

GIS

The study of Greek tumuli must take into account their spatial distribution. Their positioning in their environment and their relation to other funerary monuments and settlement remains are essential for the analysis of settlement models within the landscape. The application of new Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies in archaeology greatly assists this task.

GIS is a set of computer-based systems for managing geographic data (*i.e.* spatial data with reference to geographic space and their representation at geographic scale) and for using these data to solve various spatial problems. The skills and procedures for collecting, managing and using geographic information require a comprehensive body of scientific knowledge from which these skills and procedures are developed.²²

Geographic data can be represented in GIS as objects or fields. In the object approach, real-world features are represented by simple objects, such as points, lines and polygons. The objects are characterized by geometry, topology and non-spatial attribute values. On the other hand, in the field approach, real-world features are represented as fields of attribute data without defining objects. This approach provides attribute

16. Kaminia, Gouvalari, Kissos, Prophitis Ilias, Kanalos, Platania, Kretharetses, Mycenae, Dendra, Argos, Asine, Sovala Prastou, Mageira, Makrysia, Samikon, Aghiorgitika, Portes, Agrapidia, Thorikos, Vrana, Orchomenos, Ampheion, Marmara, Vardates, Gonnos, Pharsala, Pighi Athinas, Ephyra, Stratos (actually under water), Skaros/S-Lefkas, Ta Oikopeda, Kokkolata, Xylokastro, Kalpaki.

17. Kaminia, Gouvalari, Chania, Argos, Vrana, Vardates, Pharsala, Exalophos, Xilokastro, Kalpaki, Palaioipyrgos-Pogonion, Ephyra, Potami, Exochi.

18. Piteros 2001, p. 114-118.

19. Müller 1989, p. 24.

20. Andreou 1994, p. 233-237.

21. Piteros 2001.

22. Lo, Yeung 2003.

values in any location. In GIS, the distinction between objects and fields is associated with vector data models and raster data models.²³ The vector data model is an object-based approach for representing real-world features and is best used to represent discrete objects. All vector data models are built on two common and interrelated concepts: the decomposition of spatial objects into basic graphical elements and the use of topology (spatial relationship) and geometry (coordinates) to represent spatial objects.

Over the last 15 years, GIS has become an important tool for integrating, analysing and representing spatial information and data in archaeology. Archaeology looks into several of the aspects of the function and meaning of past activities through geography, time and culture, and the results of archaeological research are rich in spatial information creating predictive models of where unknown archaeological sites might be situated.

METHODOLOGY

GIS helps in data collection, storage, retrieval, and manipulation for customized circumstances and, finally, in the display of data, making it visually comprehensible to the user. The most important aspect of GIS in archaeology is its capability to merge and analyze different types of data to create new information.

Once the data collected during archaeological excavation or extensive survey are integrated into a GIS environment, several questions concerning the models of spatial distribution of tumuli in the landscape that led the builders to select specific sites can be answered. It is difficult to determine exactly to what degree environmental conditions, such as proximity to basic resources, safe or easily defensible locations, topography and climate (sites located on hilltops or slopes, near fertile plains, in valleys or coastal zones), and distance from other settlements, possibly large settlements in the wider region, influenced their construction.

The diversity of the Greek landscape might also be considered as another factor that influenced the design of settlements and the burial grounds connected to them. Local and peripheral variants in burial practices can be studied at a micro-topical and macro-topical level. The analysis of the location of funerary monuments appears more complicated, since the various elements of a tomb are usually incomplete and difficult to identify. The relation of funerary sites to the natural environment is more variable and less comprehensible than that of settlements. In the case of settlements, the practical aspects of the natural environment matter the most (for example, the distance from the nearest water source); in the case of funerary monuments, such aspects influence the choice of a site only indirectly. If tumuli were placed at a certain distance from settlements located near water sources, we might then be able to identify some rules and distance limits for the burial sites as well. If the course of a river has not changed dramatically since the prehistoric period, it is possible to estimate how close to rivers people chose to settle.

In general, however, the choice of funerary sites depended less on such factors and more on personal, cultural, social and economic models.

The area examined during this particular project covers those regions of the Greek mainland and islands that have yielded (through excavation or chance discovery) remains of BA tumuli. It includes 82 sites (*Appendix*) of the Peloponnese (Messenia, Korinthia, Argolid, Arkadia and Lakonia Prefectures), Attica, the southern Aegean (Cyclades), central Greece (Boeotia, Euboea and Fthiotis Prefectures), western Greece (Aetolia-Akarnania, Elis and Achaia Prefectures), the Ionian islands (Lefkas and Kephallonia Prefectures), Epirus (Ioannina Prefecture), Thessaly (Trikala and Larissa Prefectures), and east and central Macedonia (Pieria, Drama and Chalkidiki Prefectures). Despite the confirmed or presumed presence of more than one tumuli in many of the sites mentioned above, these sites were attributed a single number, which corresponds to a site-point and not to the number of tumuli.

The larger part of this project was based on bibliographic research and the digital processing of the relevant information with the aim of verifying the validity of existing hypotheses on the general principles of spatial distribution of tumuli in the landscape to assess the ways in which GIS contributes to the

23. Goodchild 1992.

understanding of certain points in the complex models of prehistoric tumuli. The data processing took place in the Laboratory of Geoinformation, Department of Natural Resources Research & Environment, Technological Educational Institute of Crete-Chania.

The central database was fed with evidence and information collected from monographs and articles on BA tumuli by known scholars.²⁴ All available data (archaeological, geomorphological, and topographical) were collected and used to create several GIS thematic layers, that would provide the appropriate information platform from which the determination of the criteria could proceed in a systematic way. All of the data were implemented into a GIS environment and data digitization using ArcGIS software package was performed. The resulting maps were geo-referenced to the World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84) so that they could all be tied to the same projection system, together with any future information that might become available.

The tumuli locations were digitized, as were the Greek border, main environmental features (major rivers and lakes) and current coastlines, making it possible to calculate the distance of the former from the latter and to use these distances as statistics.

The Digital Elevation Model (DEM) of the study area with a cell size of 90m is a continuous raster layer, in which data values represent elevation. The Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) elevation data were used as a topographic database. SRTM consisted of a specially modified radar system that flew onboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour during an 11-day mission in February of 2000. SRTM is an international project led by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), NASA, the Italian Space Agency (ASI) and

the German Aerospace Centre (DLR). There are three resolution outputs available, including 1km and 90m resolutions for the entire world.

In the subsequent phase, the above data were analyzed using automated mapping and quantitative data techniques in the GIS environment. The digitized tumuli locations (point data) were used to analyze trends in their spatial distribution using density mapping.

Moreover, the SRTM elevation data were classified into four geomorphological classes; <150m, 151-600m, 601-900m, and >900m (*fig. 4*) according to Dikau (1989), and the distribution of the tombs within these classes was calculated by comparing the observed and the predicted values. In order to assess which class is the most significant, it is necessary to consider the variable spatial extent of the classes in the landscape. The expected frequency of burial

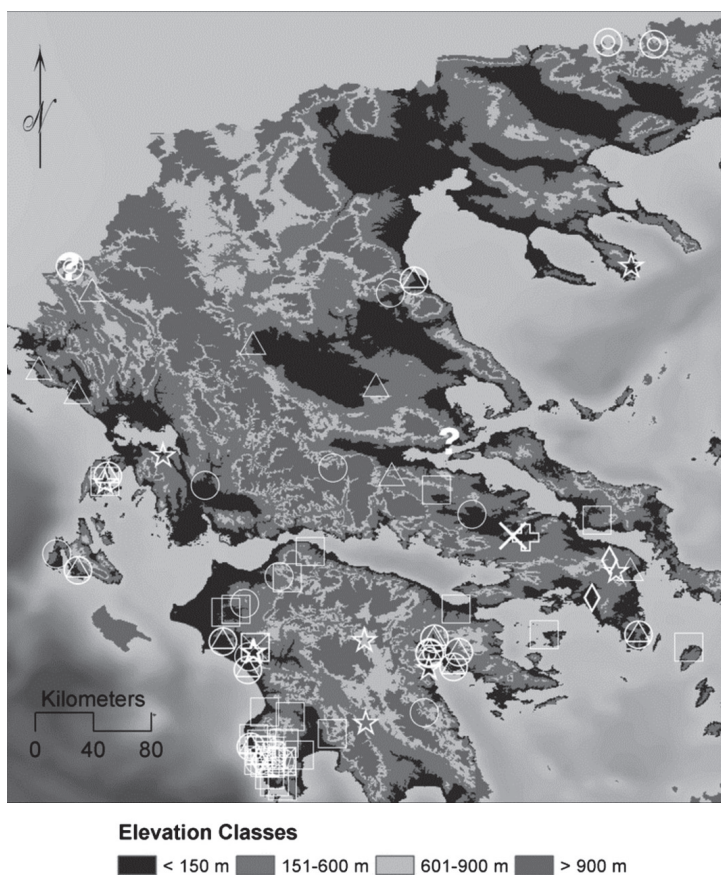


Fig. 4 – The SRTM elevation data were classified into four geomorphological groups.

24. Pelon 1976, p. 74-96; Hope Simpson 1979, p. 27-303; Sakellariou 1980, p. 90-99; Dakoronia 1987, p. 51-56; Müller 1989, p. 35-39; Forsén 1992, fig. 16; Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 22, 38-39, 57-58, 80-81, 98; Boyd 2002, p. 217-218, 222, table 3, 4, 20; Alram-Stern 2004, p. 293-296; Müller Celka 2007, p. 188-189.

sites can be calculated from here. A comparison of the observed and expected values represents a sort of index that might show the relative significance of the given environmental class for the distribution of the tumuli.²⁵ The observed to expected distribution ratio shows a preference for the first elevation class (up to 150m) (*table 1*).

Relief Class	Elevation	Geomorphological characterization (according to Dikau 1989)	Area (km ²)	Area %	Observed Tumuli	Expected Tumuli	Observed/Expected
1	<150m	Plains	31141.3	27.47	41	22.5	1.8
2	151-600m	Hills	41837.1	36.9	34	30.3	1.12
3	601-900m	High hills	19834	17.49	5	14.3	0.3
4	> 900m	Mountains	20557.8	18.13	2	14.9	0.1

Table 1 – The SRTM elevation data were classified into four geomorphological classes. The table shows the distribution of tumuli within these classes. The observed to expected distribution ratio shows a preference for the first elevation class (up to 150m).

The study provided useful statistics on tumuli, including their elevation and distance from various environmental features, which were used to identify the criteria that determined the choice of a tumulus site.

CONCLUSIONS – PROBLEMS

Areas of prehistoric activity often occur above sudden changes in slope gradient as sites above edges usually combine various benefits (good visibility of the terrain below, some natural defence, dominant position). The observed to expected distribution ratio shows a preference for the first elevation class (up to 150m) (almost 60% of the tumuli) (*fig. 5a-b*). The lower values of relative elevation generally imply places situated on a slope. Some of the lower values may still denote dominant positions, since they may be edges or promontories overlooking large areas.

The obvious, though not exclusive, predominance of certain relief types implies that several other factors influenced site location. One such factor is the location of settlements, to which a particular tumulus cemetery belonged. Because tumulus cemeteries occur in regions with dense settlement patterns, it is important to identify the tumulus' corresponding settlement. If the corresponding settlements were placed far apart from one another, it is possible that they shared the same burial mound. The prehistoric tumulus cemeteries considered in this project were located near settlements. Burial mounds were probably located in an environment unsuitable for the living thus providing a spatial separation between residential and funerary activities. Moreover, 70% of the tumuli are located less than 10km from the coast, another 70% near rivers (no further than 3km), and 20% near lakes (*fig. 5a-d, 6a-c*).

Many tumuli, however, have not yet been systematically studied and are only published in preliminary reports. The complete study of the known tumuli, the re-examination of the finds from those already excavated and the excavation of newly identified examples are all necessary for determining their complex issues. The identification and excavation of tumuli is not an easy task, particularly when the site was repeatedly re-used over long periods after the construction of the tumulus. Soil erosion or sedimentation, agricultural activity and illicit excavations in the surrounding area do not favour the preservation of tumuli over long time periods. In cases where the upper layers were removed before the tumulus was identified, it is impossible to distinguish the elevation ratio between the centre and the periphery. For example, the question whether the so-called burial circles at Mycenae, Androna and elsewhere were originally tumuli or not and in what way they relate to tumuli remains unanswered. Often the dating of tumuli is unsafe for several reasons: poor state of preservation, construction of new tombs in later times, looting in antiquity and resulting preservation of more recent grave gifts, which post-date the original burials.

25. Kuna 2006, p. 90-93.

We intend to enrich the above preliminary results with further environmental, anthropological and archaeological data, which will result from ongoing and new surveys and excavations, and to draw more precise conclusions using higher precision DEM. Our aim is to create a system for monitoring the archaeological and environmental conditions of Greek tumuli in their territorial-spatial reality using real and available data bases, possibly creating new ones, and integrating all of the available evidence.

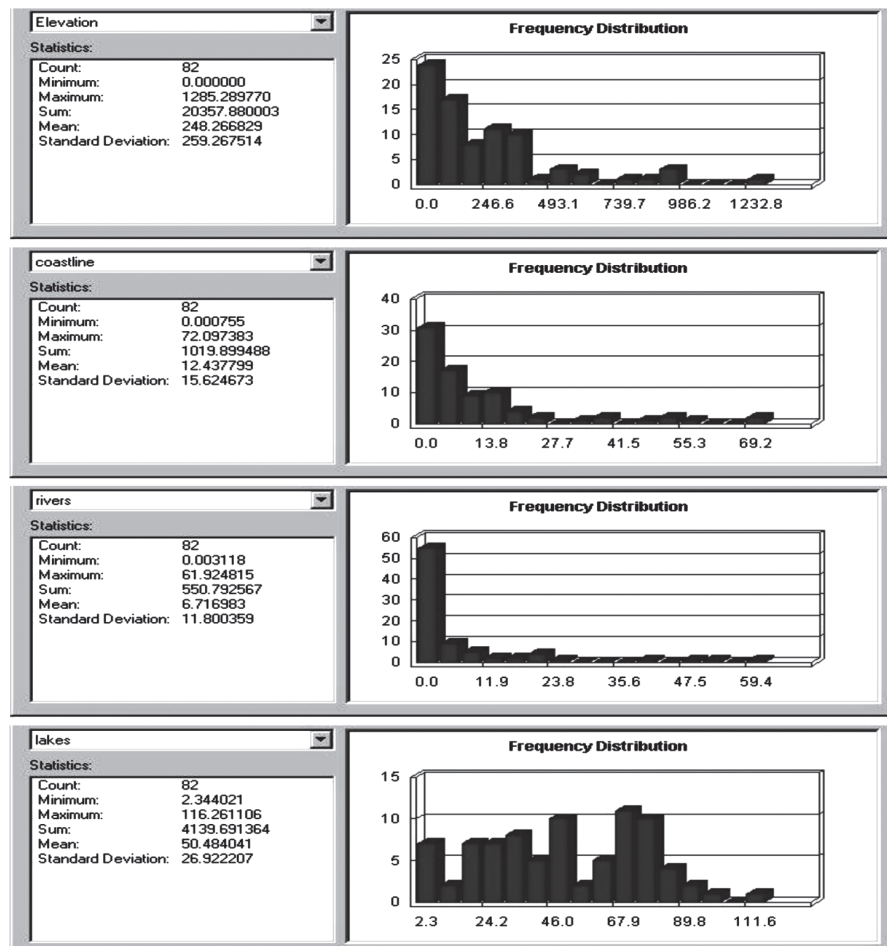


Fig. 5a-d – Frequency distribution diagrams showing the elevation of tumuli and their distance from various environmental features.

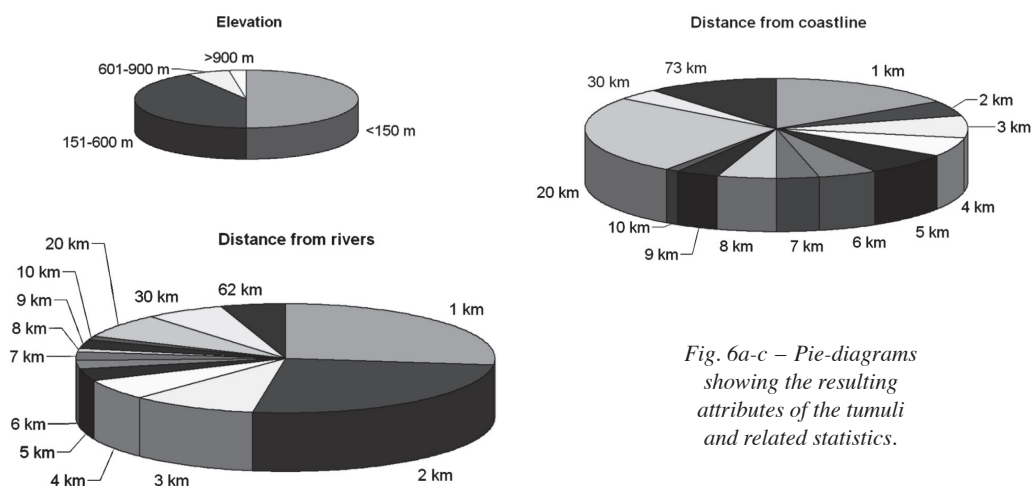


Fig. 6a-c – Pie-diagrams showing the resulting attributes of the tumuli and related statistics.

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APPENDIX

The 82 recorded tumuli and the spatial analysis results, i.e. their distance to the geomorphological elements and their elevation.

ID	LOCATION	ERA	Elevation (m)	Distance to Coastline (km)	Distance to Rivers (km)	Distance to Lakes (km)
	MESSENIA					
1	Voidokoilia	EH III-MH I	0	7.55E-04	3.01	81.13
2	Kaminia Kremidia	MH III-LH I/LH IIA/LH III C	334.76	8.56	0.59	70.73
3	Gouvalari Koukounara	MH III-LH III C	215.7	5.13	0.22	74.13
4	Chandrinou Kissos	MH?/LH II A-LH III A2/B	353.7	8.27	1.44	72.35
5	Agios Ioannis Papoulion	EH III-MH II	318.72	8.31	1.88	71.36
6	Routsi Mirsinochori	MH II-III	262.51	7.95	0.64	72.22
7	Nichoria-Akones	MH	88.1	2.45	0.88	62.47
8	Peristeria Kokorakou	MH I-II	26.55	1.52	2.57	62
9	Prophitis Ilias Voidokoilia	LH II-III A	0	0.1	2.7	81.01
10	Tragana Kapoureika	MH?	176.85	3.03	1.87	76.78
11	Lefki Kaldamou	MH	255.66	4.15	1.64	75.66
12	Kanalos	MH?-LH	57.48	1.2	7.27	79.17
13	Pirgos Tsouka	MH?	315.71	7.25	3.64	73.08
14	Milioti Agios Ilias	MH?	393.68	14.37	1.28	62.83
15	Platania Chandrinou	LH III A-B	299.89	7.32	1.02	73.03
16	Valta Kastraki	MH?	260.92	4.16	1.75	74.84
17	Kretharetses Platanos	MH?-LH	192.89	5.57	2.41	74.44
18	Mesochori Gdhiti Rahi	MH?	232.5	3.69	6.56	83.69
19	Malthi	MH	288.51	15.54	0.51	49.94

20	Kastroulia-Ellinika	MH I	521.72	11.98	0.19	39.75
21	Evangelismos Methoni	MH	125.26	3.82	3.97	85.41
22	Yalova Palaiochori	MH?	0	0.42	0.25	79.33
23	Dhivari	MH	0	0.03	2.63	81.03
24	Foinikounta	MH?	6.72	0.26	0.86	85
25	Pila Vigles	MH	121.79	1.89	0.71	77.62
	KORINTHIA					
26	Corinth	MH III	65.1	2.96	1.35	35.47
	ARGOLIS					
27	Mycenae	MH III-LH II A	125.53	14.73	1.42	27.65
28	Chania Mycenae	LH III C	96.48	14.89	0.77	26.96
29	Dendra Midea	MH-LH	286.58	10.98	6.16	44.02
30	Argos	MH I-III/LH I	211.24	6.23	1.39	31.91
31	Argos	LH III C	76.73	5.47	1.65	32.58
32	Lerna	EH II	24.11	0.57	1.89	31.38
33	Asine	MH II-LH II A	18.07	2.03	1.24	44.3
	ARKADIA					
34	Orchomenos	EH II	831.09	39.27	4.63	17.65
35	Sovala Prastou Kynourias	LH I-IIA	818.97	13.03	1.35	32.79
	LAKONIA					
36	Pellana	EH II	392.93	26.02	0.68	25.22
	West Greece					
	ELIS					
37	Olympia New Museum	EH III	89.88	11.76	0.59	47.85
38	Olympia Pelopion	EH II-III	47.84	12.19	3.12E-03	48.26
39	Mageira	MH?/LH III B	94.52	14.43	0.1	46.7
40	Makrysia Profitis Elias	LH I-II A	48.74	7.24	0.89	49.98
41	Kato Samiko Klidhi	MH III-LH II/ LH III A2-B	0	0.95	1.25	57.65
42	Armatova Agrapidhohori	MH	87	23.12	1.94	21.42
43	Agios Elias	MH	82.11	19.25	2	18.08
44	Agiorgitika Epitalion	MH-LH	62.16	6.94	0.55	34.35
	ACHAIA					
45	Aravonitsa	MH	444.35	4.89	1.94	50.37
46	Mirali Katarraktis	MH	635.26	16.38	0.68	38.01
47	Portes	LH IA-II/III A-B	362.61	22.62	1.72	24
48	Agrapidia Chalandritsa	LH I-II	367.2	12.06	2.76	33.4
	AETOLIA -AKARNANIA					
49	Loutraki Katouna	EH III	117.41	0.91	3.96	10.14
50	Stratos	LH?	100.46	19.37	0.06	7.72

	ATTICA					
51	Athens	EH III/MH I	83.78	5.29	4.17	8.53
52	Thorikos	MH III/LH I	309.86	3.5	20.6	28.37
53	Tsepi Marathon	EH I	386.27	9.83	16.61	2.34
54	Vrana Marathon	LH I-III C	55.96	4.55	22.87	5.27
55	Aphidna	EH III/MH I	410.35	10.87	13.29	4.52
56	Kolona Aigina	MH III	25.39	0.46	25.09	41.58
	Central Greece					
	BOEOTIA					
57	Orchomenos	LH III	101.82	18.19	1.9	22.19
58	Ampeion Thebes	EH II, LH I	109.56	16.66	9.02	4.62
59	Thebes Museum	EH II, MHIII	199.67	17.59	8.31	2.9
	EUBOEIA					
60	Kamarion	MH	300.66	6.1	10.79	32.18
	FTHIOTIS					
61	Drachmani Elateia	MH I	291.6	14.76	5.21	46.87
62	Marmara Oiti	LH III	1285.28	36.23	5.94	77.06
63	Vardates	LH III B-C	980.42	11.52	2.39	73.45
64	Pelasgia	BA	212.76	2.76	8.93	67.06
	THESSALY					
65	Exalophos	LH III C	141.93	72.09	0.97	47.34
66	Gonnos	LH III A-B	128.21	18.86	2.79	104.08
67	Pharsala	LH/LH III A-C	137.18	37.14	3.73	116.26
	CYCLADES					
68	Agia Irini Kea	MBA	44.02	0.22	48.97	54.03
	EPIRUS					
69	Xylokastro Mesopotamos	LH III B-C	7.97	4.62	0.13	42.87
70	Kalpaki	LH III B-C	407.26	47.53	4.9	28.73
71	Palaiopyrgos Pogonion	LH III C	930.49	51.47	1.29	48.41
72	Meropi	?	969.78	51.18	0.91	48.97
73	Ephyra	LH III	527.66	2.57	11.91	31.27
	LEFKAS					
74	Steno/R	EH/MH	6.02	0.07	20.51	20.41
75	Steno/F	MH II-III	8.29	0.06	20.51	20.43
76	Skaros/S	MH-LH I	365.93	0.8	16.26	16.33
	KEPHALLONIA					
77	Ta Oikopeda Kontogenada	LH II-III A	232.59	2.05	61.92	76.58
78	Kokkolata Kangelisses	MH III/LH I	62.75	3.3	54.02	67.15
	MACEDONIA					
79	Pighi Athinas Olympus	MH III-LH I	140.46	4.66	1.79	90.67
80	Potami Nevrokopi	LBA III C	522.4	57.57	0.56	92.8
81	Exochi Nevrokopi	LBA III C	624.87	70.56	10.31	84.56
	CHALKIDIKI					
82	Kriaritsi Sykia	EBA	10.33	1.18	42.33	74.59

MNEMONIC LANDSCAPES AND MONUMENTS OF THE PAST

TUMULI, THOLOS TOMBS AND LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATIONS IN LATE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE AND EARLY LATE BRONZE AGE MESSENA (GREECE)

Yannis GALANAKIS*

ABSTRACT

The paper explores the landscape associations between tumuli and tholos tombs in the Aegean. In doing so, emphasis is placed on issues of visibility, proximity and placement of the tombs in the landscape. The extent to which tumuli may have influenced the location of tholos tombs is reconsidered by looking at the process of creation of a new funerary tradition which made claims to the monuments of the past. It is argued that location and landscape associations, as opposed to physical prominence, may have played a crucial role in strategies of display and particularly in the construction and/or reconfiguration of mnemonic landscapes.

People travelling on the A40 motorway from Oxford to London witness a wondrous spectacle: the Northala fields, four tall conical mounds made of the spoil from the construction of the new Wembley stadium and White City.¹ Apart from the environmentally friendly reuse of the debris, the Northala mounds act formidably as shields for the newly built park to the east by blocking the noise pollution of the busy A40. Most intriguingly, they are considered public art. At the same time, however, they summarize some of the ideas I would like to explore in the present paper: 1) the visibility (physical prominence) of mounds in the landscape, their impact on the viewer and their proximity to major routes leading to and from the settlement; 2) the interaction with and reuse of the (not so distant in the case of Northala) past and 3) the creation of landmarks that shape relationships between people and their environment.

During the Middle Bronze Age (MBA hereafter) in the Aegean, earthen mounds were used to conceal a number of different tomb types. From the end of the MBA and throughout the Late Bronze Age (LBA hereafter), a new funerary type was added to the list of tombs covered under an earthen mound: the tholos.² It has been argued that the tholos derived from or was strongly influenced by the tumuli tradition, although

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1. http://www.ealing.gov.uk/services/leisure/parks_and_open_spaces/new_developments/northala/ (last accessed 10 February 2009).

2. Tumuli in the Greek landscape are not necessarily of Bronze Age date. They also appear in certain regions from the Geometric down to the Roman period. In addition, as the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project (PRAP) showed, not all mounds have a burial function: some of them may actually be the result of more recent accumulation through agricultural practice (Davis *et al.* 1997, p. 486-487, *e.g.* Pyrgaki: Tsouka and Chora: Koukouyera).

other local features like giant *pithoi* (storage jars) of the MBA may have also inspired its form.³ It has been widely acknowledged that the earthen mounds of tumuli and tholos tombs would give a similar impression to the viewer by concealing the structural differences of the two funerary forms, on the assumption that all stone built tumuli were indeed covered by an earthen mound. It has also been proposed that tholoi constituted a logical extension and intensification of MBA status marking,⁴ especially in Messenia, the area with the largest concentration of tumuli and early tholos tombs in the Aegean.

In the present paper, I propose to explore the landscape associations between tumuli and tholos tombs in Messenia.⁵ In doing so, I intend to place emphasis on issues of visibility, proximity and placement of the tombs in the landscape. After assessing the landscape associations of the two funerary forms, I would like to argue that although the visual continuity in the Messenian landscape may have made claims to the past, at the same time it was progressively appropriated to serve the needs for power display of rising local elites. I will finish by examining the site of Englianos, the site of the so-called “Palace of Nestor”, in an attempt to exemplify how in this particular case the placement of tholos tombs may have helped to transform the landscape into the ideal arena for power display.

However, any attempt to discuss the issue of landscape associations is hampered by a number of obstacles. Very few tholos mounds have been thoroughly investigated and only a handful of MBA tumuli have been properly studied and published. In order to appreciate the setting and prominence of the tombs, further work is needed towards the reconstruction of the Aegean Bronze Age landscape, especially the area surrounding the tumuli and tholos tombs.⁶ Additionally, it is very frustrating to have substantial funerary data and at the same time to know very little about the settlements with which the tombs were associated.

MBA TUMULI (FIG. 1)

Despite sharing some basic characteristics, tumuli in the Aegean are almost individually idiosyncratic monuments. They are considerably diverse in their lifecycle, size, architecture, construction and the number and types of tombs they conceal.⁷ MBA tumuli in the Aegean have a diameter ranging from 8 to 30m and a height ranging from 1 to 5m, meaning that some allowance must be made for the effects of erosion.

The visual impact of Bronze Age tumuli in the Aegean should not be exaggerated. Most of them constituted simple earthen rises slightly swollen at the centre.⁸ Taking into account the topography and geomorphology of the Greek landscape, and of Messenia in particular, it becomes apparent that in the majority of cases the visual impact (the physical prominence) of tumuli would have been limited at close quarters, unlike for example the vast grasslands of the steppes where mounds may have actually mapped the landscape.⁹

As far as the landscape associations of tumuli with tholos tombs are concerned, so far in only one instance in Messenia, at Voidokoilia, is an early tholos directly associated with an earlier tumulus (in this case of MH I date). The tholos, as shown by Professor Korres, was inserted almost in the centre of the MBA tumulus itself built over an EH II settlement.¹⁰ This action might have constituted a direct claim

3. Korres 1993, with earlier literature; Korres, this volume.

4. Voutsaki 1995; Bennet 1998, p. 125; Boyd 2002.

5. For MBA Messenia see also the recent review of new sites by Chasiakou and Korres 2006; for an overview see also Boyd 2002.

6. A good example towards this direction is the work carried out by Zangger *et al.* 1997 for PRAP.

7. Müller 1989.

8. Pelon 1976; Cavanagh, Mee 1998.

9. For a brief overview on tumuli in Europe see Harding 2000, p. 84-103.

10. Korres 1993; outside Messenia, something similar is attested at Amparia Loutrakiou in west central Greece (see Müller Celka, this volume). The tombs at Kato Samiko, with the exception of the two (?) tholoi are here considered “grave circles”. I take into account only those tombs securely identified as tumuli.

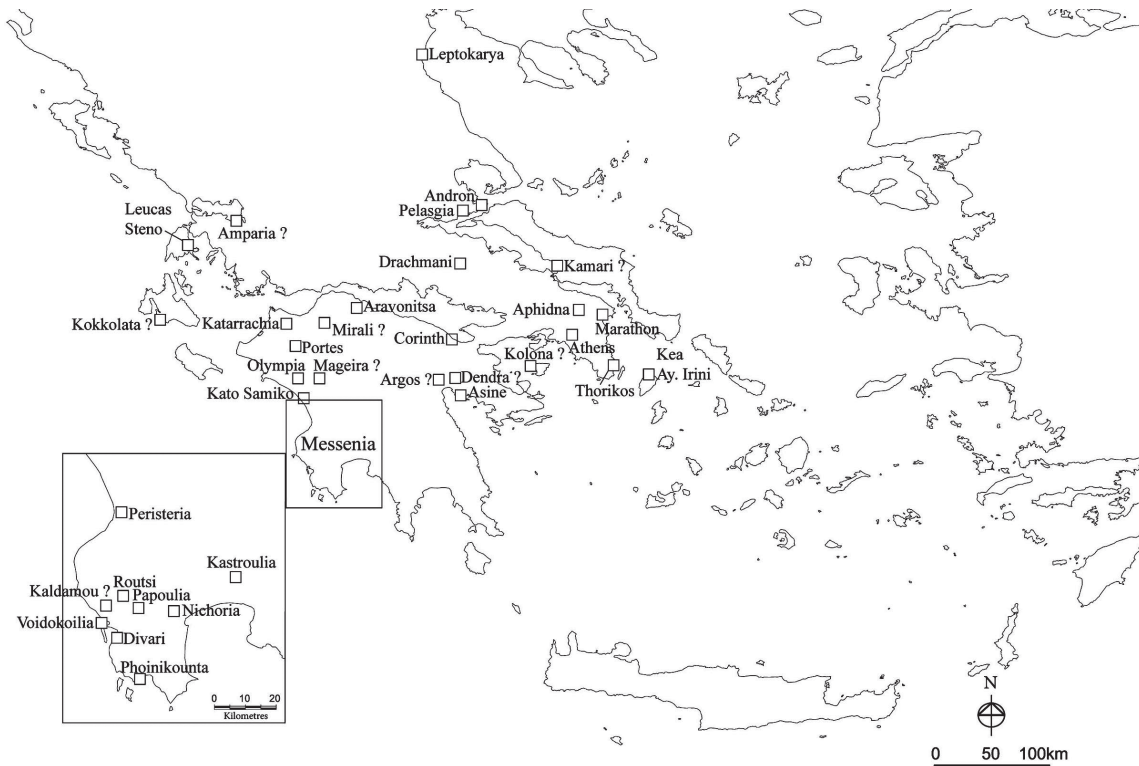


Fig. 1 – Map showing the distribution of Middle Bronze Age tumuli in the Aegean. Tumuli identified in surveys (date uncertain) and the tumuli covering the small and crudely-built tholos tombs at Kaminia and Gouvalari are not included in this map (adapted by the author after Müller Celka 2007, p. 188-189 and pl. 43). For an update see also Papakonstantinou in this volume.

on behalf of the tholos-using groups to these layers of past occupation, resulting in the creation of an archaeological palimpsest.

Although future investigation of more tholos mounds in their entirety may bring to light more such examples, at present tholos tombs are infrequently found in very close proximity to early funerary mounds (that is <100m, e.g. at Thorikos, Kato Samiko and perhaps Dendra).¹¹ In most instances, where tholoi and tumuli co-exist within the same territory, they are situated hundreds of metres apart: from about 500m (to the west of Peristeria and to the SW of Routsi) to about 1km (to the west of Papoulia).¹² (fig. 2) In the case of the Englianos and Hellenika ridges in Messenia, MBA tumuli were placed in prominent locations on the opposite ridges (to the west in the case of Englianos: *Kaldamou* and to the east in the case of Hellenika: *Kastroulia*)¹³. Although these tumuli may have retained some visual contact with the areas where the settlements later developed, they were certainly not inter-visible with the tholos tombs.

11. I do not include Mycenae (see Dickinson, this volume). A long-standing tradition in elite burials may have increased the receptivity (or paved the way) for the introduction of new funerary forms. In a number of sites across mainland Greece there appears to be an area reserved for elite burials from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age. There is generally a tendency from LH II to move away from the ancestral burial grounds (Aravantinos, Fappas 2009, in relation to the chamber tombs at Thebes).
12. Something similar can be observed outside Messenia, e.g. at Marathon in Attica (600m to the east of the MBA tumuli). In order to evaluate properly this data one has to take into account settlement patterns and the maximum distribution (radius) of tombs associated with these settlements (a difficult exercise for the MBA). During the LBA, where evidence exists, the maximum radius for cemeteries and tombs to be associated with a single settlement appears to be 1.5km, though this is only an average (and there is considerable spatial and temporal variation: Galanakis 2008; for a critique on clustering practices and the archaeological problems involved see Dickinson 1982, especially p. 127-130).
13. Spencer 1995a; Boyd 2002, p. 134-137 (Lefki: *Kaldamou*, six or more mounds of assumed MBA date); Rambach 2007 and this volume for Hellenika: *Kastroulia*.

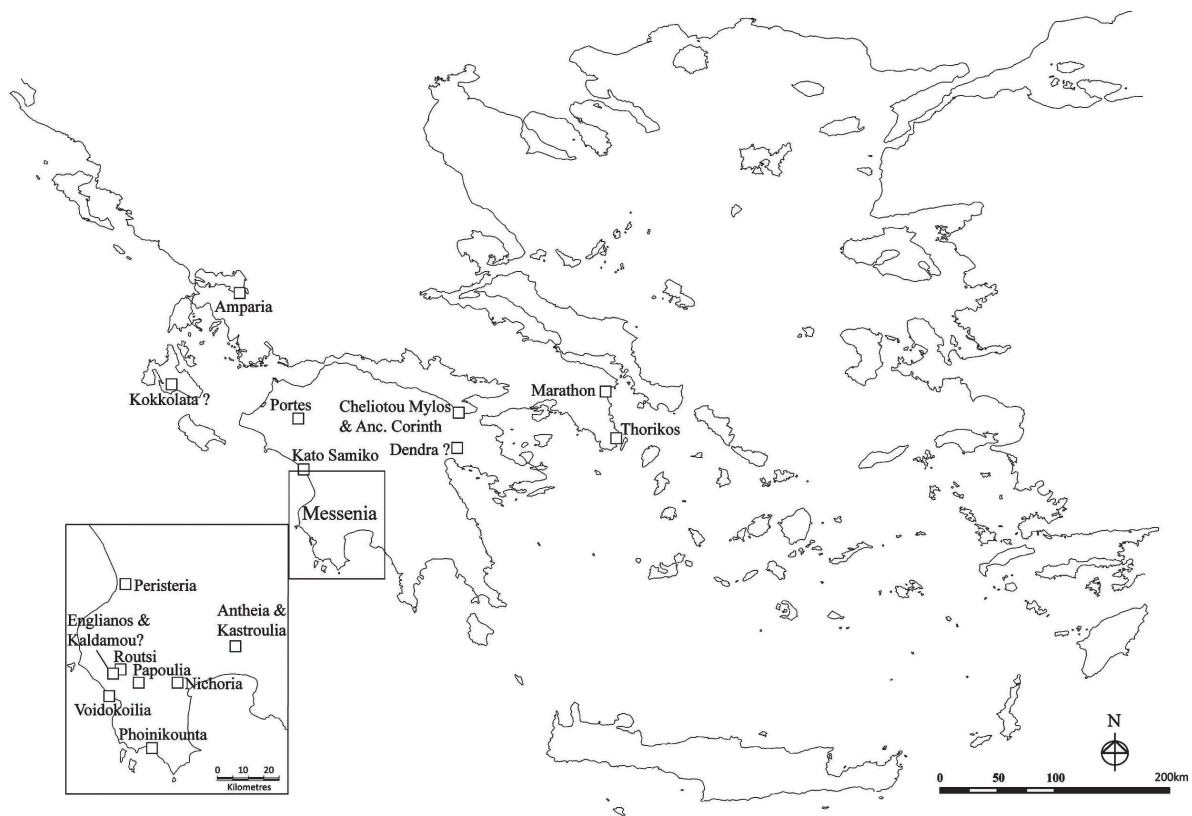


Fig. 2 – Map showing the co-occurrence of Middle Bronze Age tumuli and Late Bronze Age (LH I-IIIb) tholos tombs in the Aegean (either side by side or within a radius of 1km [i.e. at different locations but under the same site name]). About 45% of the sites with excavated MBA tumuli have also yielded at least one tholos within a radius of 1km (map prepared by the author).

Overall, there is little inter-visibility between the earlier funerary structures and the later tholoi, perhaps with the exception of Peristeria. More importantly, the proximity of tholos tombs to tumuli is best understood in relation to the proximity (if not overlap) of the LBA settlement to earlier habitation sites. This is to say that, whatever the influence of tumuli on the development of the tholos, little effort was made to retain any association between the two funerary forms other than the visual continuity achieved by the mound. This is an important point since it appears to refer to the mnemonic (as opposed to the physical) marking of the landscape. Mnemonic landscapes can appropriate past monuments and structures or artfully “forget” their existence.¹⁴ They construct, and potentially control, memories. They can unite but can also divide by demarcating spatial relationships and renegotiating the ways in which the surrounding environment is approached, envisaged and used.

Thus, the position of tholoi in Messenia does not appear to have been determined in any significant way by the presence of tumuli (especially of pre-late MBA date), with the exception so far of Voidokoilia. Moreover the construction of tholos tombs often post-dates, sometimes by hundreds of years, the last period of use of the nearby tumuli. Something similar may have happened with the placement of a number of MBA tumuli in Messenia on top of or near EH II settlements.¹⁵ It is the history of the

14. Mnemonic is here used as “aiding or designed to aid the memory; of, or relating to, [the power of] memory” (according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*). An important element in the construction of memory is the power of forgetting: the reshaping and renegotiation of past memories “deployed by the élite as a way of marshalling general support for their own stand” (Osborne 2003, p. 143). For mnemonic practices at Mycenae see Button 2007.

15. E.g. at Voidokoilia, Routsis: Kalogeropoulos, Papoulia: Agios Ioannis, Hellenika: Kastroulia, etc.

settlement and the world of the living that may provide us with some more vital clues with regard to the location of these tombs. The tombs were probably built in close proximity to habitation sites (as *e.g.* at Asine in the Argolid), although we unfortunately know very little about the association of tumuli with specific settlements in MBA Messenia. It is thus imperative to focus archaeological investigation in the future on settlement sites in an attempt to contextualize these monuments within their broader built environment.

THOLOS TOMBS

Let us now turn our attention to tholos tombs. Although the overall appearance of tholoi may seem standardized, they too are characterized by considerable diversity, especially in terms of size, architectural elaboration, funerary assemblage, prominence in the landscape and regional and chronological frequencies. To date, more than two hundred LBA tholos tombs have been found in the Aegean: as far north as the southern slopes of Mt Olympus to as far south as Crete and as far west as the Ionian Islands and SW Epirus to as far east as the Aegean islands and the coast of west Turkey, dating from around 1700 to 1200 B.C., although in some regions they continued down to the Early Iron Age and even into later periods.¹⁶

The tholos tomb consists of a thalamos (chamber), a stomion (entrance) and a dromos (passageway), though the latter element is not always attested. The earthen mound covering the tomb is one of the most prominent features in the completed monument in tholos architecture. The mound prevented the stones of the corbelled vault from slipping and provided the backfill that counterweighted the forces of the corbelled chamber walls. In this respect it had a more structural role than most of the earthen mounds of earlier tumuli. In some tholos tombs the exterior of the stone vault was often coated with several layers of plaster in an attempt to insulate and perhaps even draw attention to the domed vault of the chamber that would have protruded, in most cases, considerably above ground. Retaining walls are often found in association with the earthen mound of tholos tombs. These walls would have prevented the earth fill from slipping and marked out the earthen mound.

Although it is difficult today to assess the prominence of tholos tombs in the landscape due to soil erosion or aggradations, this would have varied considerably: from tombs completely buried underground (like the tholoi at Kokla in the Argolid and Marathon in Attica) to a gentle rise or even prominent knoll in the landscape (as in the case of Georgiko in Thessaly). The prominence of the tombs depended on a number of factors, including local topography and the surrounding landscape as well as the placement of the tomb in relation to ground-level (*e.g.* above-ground, semi-underground or completely underground).¹⁷ The corbelled vault of the early tholos tombs in Messenia would have made a considerable impact on the viewer since most of the tombs were either semi-underground or above-ground structures.

Despite the protruding vault, which in most cases was probably covered with an earthen mound, tholos tombs would generally be appreciated from a short distance (perhaps a few hundred metres). Very few tholoi might have achieved a long-range physical prominence (as *e.g.* Georgiko in Thessaly). Thus, most Aegean tholoi (also due to the uneven and mountainous terrain of the Greek landscape) would have only been visible at close quarters (something already noted in the case of the tumuli in Messenia). It appears that in most cases the tombs and their mounds were visible from the settlement or some of the routes that led to it.

However, we are running the risk here of undermining the importance of mounds: even though they might not have been highly visible in terms of physical prominence, they might have been perceivable and in this case the manipulation by local elites of memory and tradition plays a prominent role in

16. For a thorough discussion see Galanakis 2008.

17. Even Koryfasio was not completely underground: as noted by Zangger *et al.* 1997, p. 573, “the burial of the tomb is simply due to geological processes” that took place over time after it went out of use.

reading the mnemonic landscape¹⁸ – and by that, I refer to the embeddedness and mapping of memories on the landscape. That is to say that visibility from a distance may not have been as vital a characteristic as the positioning of the tombs in certain locations for fulfilling various goals and aspirations other than achieving physical prominence from afar. Therefore, we should try to avoid projecting our modern preconceived ideas about physical prominence onto the past, as landscape archaeology sometimes tends to do. We should also try to look beyond the practical parameters (e.g. proximity to arable land; water resources; or, as argued in this case, physical prominence in the landscape). In addition, mythological/cosmological landscapes in a micro-regional scale may have also played a prominent role in shaping the ways in which people approached and understood the visible as well as the invisible past.¹⁹ The past is often mapped on the landscape – either as part of the landscape's physical properties, or, more importantly, because of the interaction of people's experiences and memories with it. In a sense, we should be looking for the “experienced” landscape where memories and emotions are combined.

In their study on the location of Mycenaean tombs, Cavanagh and Mee concluded that the position of tombs within a territory does not appear to have been determined by any single factor.²⁰ Although appropriate geological conditions may have been sought after by the builders (especially for the construction of certain types of tombs, like the rock-cut chamber tombs), the position of the tomb was surely not dictated on grounds of geology alone. Several interpretations have been put forward in order to explain the placement of tombs, ranging from traditional and eschatological beliefs to territorial or social claims.²¹ It appears that although some factors may have been more prominent than others, overall we should not expect a unifying element, a single answer, but should rather try to assess tombs and cemeteries in their own social, geographical and chronological context. This is not to say that the location they occupied was accidental or unimportant. On the contrary, tombs may have taken up a special place in the socio-political, natural or even eschatological landscape. In this respect location and associations rather than physical prominence may have been more important for the individuals that commissioned and interacted with these tombs.

THE “PALACE OF NESTOR” AT ANO ENGLIANOS (FIG. 3)

The well-surveyed, thoroughly studied and published site of Englianos provides us with an ideal case for exploring the factors that may have influenced the position of tombs in the landscape not least because it was the only site with early tholos tombs in the region to develop into a major administrative centre in Messenia in LH III based on the Linear B documents.

In the late MBA to early LBA a fortification wall was built at the site around the highest point of the ridge, defining the area later to be occupied by palatial structures.²² There is scarcely any evidence for structures of this phase beneath the later palatial remains, even after the recent detailed investigation of the available data by Nelson.²³ Despite the lack of evidence, it is significant that the north eastern sector of this circuit has an elaborate entranceway aligned directly on the stomion of tholos IV.²⁴ This alignment underlines vividly how certain individuals at Englianos may have decided to associate the settlement closely

18. For mounds and monuments in general as focal points of memory and identity see Spencer 1995b; Bradley 1998; Bradley 2002; Bailey 2000; Alcock 2002; van Dyke, Alcock 2003 (various articles); Papadopoulos *et al.* 2008 (with references); see also <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/iaa/staff/papadopoulos/lofkend/index.html> (last accessed 10 February 2009), and Palumbi, this volume.

19. Della Casa, this volume.

20. Cavanagh, Mee 1990; Mee, Cavanagh 1990.

21. See *e.g.* the recent study by Georgiadis and Gallou (2006-07) which highlights regional differences in the placement of the tombs in the landscape between the Argolid and the Dodecanese.

22. Blegen *et al.* 1973, p. 4-18; Bennet 2007, p. 34.

23. Nelson 2001.

24. Blegen *et al.* 1973, p. 3, fig. 4; Davis 1998, p. 56; Bennet 2007, p. 34.

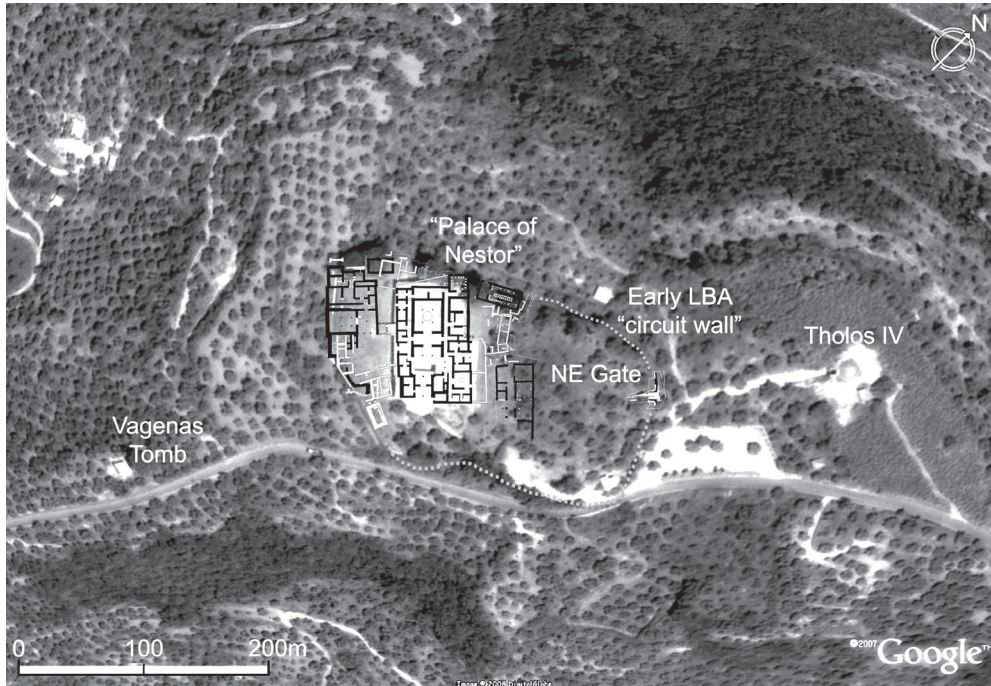
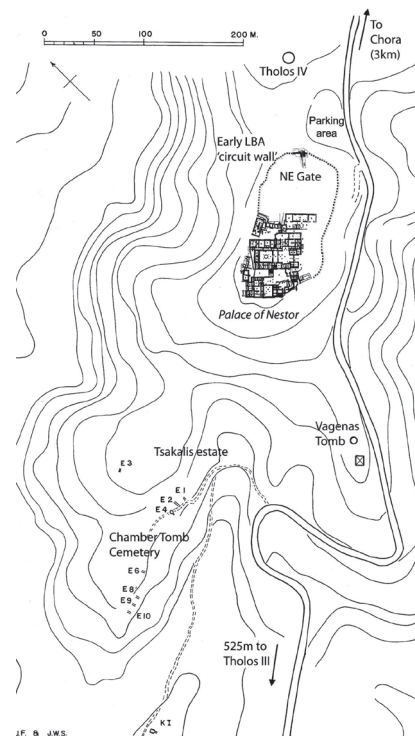


Fig. 3 – The “Palace of Nestor” at Ano Englianos (adapted by the author after Google Earth and Blegen et al. 1973, fig. 303 and 304).

with funerary monumentality and at the same time delimit the site of habitation.

Tholos IV was built in LH I and is chronologically the second tholos to be built at Ano Englianos. However, this demarcation may have already started with the positioning of the Vagenas tomb built late in the MBA right on the final ascent to the Acropolis, about 150m to the south of the Englianos hill. The Vagenas tomb commanded a superb view of the Bay of Navarino and the island of Sphakteria as well as of the areas to the southwest, that is, the areas that were to become (if they were not already) part of the dominion of Pylos.²⁵

The fact that these two tholoi are not situated on the highest point of the hill, but rather lie on lower ground, each on either side of the ridge top, made John Bennet suggest that they may have acted as territorial markers bounding the settlement.²⁶ Their clustering is rather unusual for they are about 400m apart, while in most other cases tholoi often tend to be found in closely arranged clusters (within a radius of 100m, as is often the case with clusters of tumuli).



25. Schepartz *et al.* 2009; but see also Boyd 2002, p. 151, who discusses the possibility of the Vagenas tholos being a depository for secondary burials. This assumption should advise us that the date of construction of the Vagenas tholos may not be necessarily synchronous with the “earliest date of use” based on the finds accompanying the secondary burials.

26. Bennet 1998; Bennet 2007; see also Wright 1984. Both tombs are visible from either end of the ridge top. The positioning of tumuli and tholoi in central Pylia on ridges appears to relate to settlement patterns (though this is not strictly followed outside this region: *e.g.* in the nearby Soulima Valley to the north LH II-III tholoi are situated in the plain as at Vasiliiko, Kopanaki and Malthi and on ridges as at Peristeria, Psari and Chalkias; in addition, settlement and tomb(s) may have occupied quite distinct locations as *e.g.* at Malthi). For mounds as markers, perhaps as early as the Early Bronze Age see Weiberg 2007, p. 165-166.

The position of the two tombs also appears to follow the natural NE-SW contours of the land: the Vagenas tomb stood prominently on the final ascent to the acropolis, while tholos IV was perhaps the first major structure to be encountered by the passerby coming from the NE (that is, from Chora with the extensive cemetery of chamber tombs, *ca.* 3km to the NE of the Englianos site, but where so far no tholos has been discovered).

In LH II a new tholos, tholos III, was built about 1km to the SW of the acropolis of Englianos and about 700m from the Vagenas tomb. Situated away from the other two tholoi, tholos III would have been the first of a series of funerary monuments encountered by the passerby on his ascent to the acropolis. Its placement away from the acropolis has been interpreted as a reflection of the possible expansion of the settlement site at that time and of the Pylian polity as a whole. In this respect it could be argued that tombs became part of a wider strategy that entailed the creation of mnemonic landscapes,²⁷ whatever the physical prominence of the monuments might have been.²⁸

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It has already been argued that, early in the LBA, the tholos tomb became an instrument of display. Irrespective of its origins, the tholos appears to represent the culmination of the development of monumental funerary architecture, a phenomenon that in SW Peloponnese probably started in the early MBA. However, the number of tholoi in Messenia, the differences in their funerary assemblage and architectural elaboration appear to suggest that this particular tomb type was not, at least in this region and certainly in the early stages, the exclusive tomb type of the elite.²⁹ The same is probably true for the Messenian tumuli, although more work is needed in order to understand their social complexities.³⁰

Yet, a number of tholoi would have acted as focal points for elite display to a wider community; display perhaps in support of claims to rule by certain members of the elite,³¹ as was probably the case at Englianos. The spiralling architectural elaboration of tholoi, especially during LH II, appears further to reinforce this notion.

However, as the example of Englianos suggests, the position of tombs in the landscape may have already from LH I become a tool not only for making claims on the past but also for displaying a new cultural rhetoric; a package of social and ideological practices that was emulated by a number of groups around Pylos and beyond. If one looks at the sites that would have probably constituted the main rivals of Englianos's power, Kakovatos and Peristeria, a similar pattern, though not as widespread as at Englianos, can be observed, with the clustering of tholoi probably along the main routes leading to the settlements (and this pattern is in no case restricted to Messenia; see *e.g.* Thorikos in Attica, Mycenae in the Argolid and Knossos in Crete).

27. It is worth mentioning here the distinction within the Pylos polity of the "Further" and "Hither Aigaleon" provinces, which imply a "mental map" (Bennet 1998, p. 114) and helps, to some extent, to underline the importance of mnemonic landscapes for the agents of the time (either funerary and/or political or simply geographical).

28. At the beginning of LH IIIA the Vagenas Grave Circle goes out of use to be followed soon afterwards by tholos IV (sometime in LH IIIA). The thousands of *kylikes* and other potsherds discovered in the parking area during the 1968-1969 trial trenches by Blegen's team could suggest that this broad plaza to the northeast of the ridge may have been used as an open space suitable for gatherings (Blegen *et al.* 1973, p. 64-67; Prof. J. Davis, pers. comm. 16 February 2009), perhaps in relation to the commemorialization of tholos IV (cf. the LH IIIB remodelling of Grave Circle A at Mycenae and the open spaces in front of the Atreus and Clytemnestra tholoi; for the "symbolic manipulation of sacred and ancestral geographies" in LH IIIB see Gallou 2005, p. 24-30). Only tholos III probably stayed in use down to LH IIIB (early) along with a few chamber tombs.

29. Voutsaki 1995; Voutsaki 1998; see also Bennet, Galanakis 2005.

30. A good example of how to move forward is offered by the Middle Helladic Argolid Project "Shifting Identities" (Voutsaki *et al.*, this volume).

31. Bennet 2007, p. 36; Wright 1995; Voutsaki 1995.

The long-distance physical prominence of tumuli and tholos mounds in the landscape has been exaggerated somewhat in the archaeological literature of the 2nd millennium B.C. in the Aegean. I have tried to argue that the impact on the viewer was, in most cases, from close quarters. Emphasis was placed, at least in the early LBA, on the mnemonic rather than the physical prominence of the monument. Tombs (architecture and burial practices) became part of wider, complex strategies that entailed the construction and re-negotiation of power relations. The proximity of important tombs along the major routes leading to and from the settlements may have contributed towards the creation of mnemonic landscapes and in some sites almost certainly demarcated settlement boundaries (thus creating landmarks that shaped relationships between people and their natural and social environment).³² In most instances monuments of the past (that is of a MBA date) were either forgotten (they went out of use), re-discovered (as at Voidokoilia) or re-configured to serve the aspirations and needs of the new rising elites (as was perhaps the case with the MBA mounds and the LBA tombs between Kastroulia and Antheia and perhaps Kaldamou and Englianos).

This brief presentation does not claim to have covered all the issues associated with the landscape associations of tumuli and tholoi or their possible regional and chronological differences. I have simply tried to demonstrate that a discussion of landscape associations can form a useful exercise in an attempt to assess how the different elements of the built environment may have influenced each other and in particular the appearance and spatial setting of the tombs.³³ It is hoped that the publication of a number of unpublished tumuli will help us gain a better understanding of their date of construction and use; the accurate fixing of their locations on large-scale maps will improve our knowledge of the setting of these monuments in the landscape;³⁴ what will, however, be essential in the future is the excavation of the settlement sites (wherever they may still survive).³⁵ Settlements may not necessarily provide us with an answer to all our questions but will help us appreciate even further the interaction between the world of the dead and the world of the living.

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32. E.g. they may have created limits and new relations as to who has access and who has not to the settlement site.
33. The progressive construction (often in layers) of some tumuli entails a different lifecycle and impact to that of the tholoi, the form of which was not altered in any dramatic way after the first interment(s). For the lifecycle of tumuli and the implications it may have on the way we approach and interpret them see e.g. Borgna, this volume. Micromorphology will certainly enhance our understanding of the different phases of use of earthen tumuli (see Papadopoulos *et al.* 2008; see also its recent application in chamber tombs in the Argolid: Wright *et al.* 2008, especially p. 635-643).
34. Davis *et al.* 1997, p. 486; Merkouri, Kouli in this volume; also Kuna 2006.
35. For a constructive critique on the often contrasting (though to a large extent inter-related) attitudes and approaches in archaeology, namely “settlement patterns” versus “landscape studies”, see Sherratt 1996.

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THE BELL BEAKER TUMULUS ON VIA BRUSCHI IN SESTO FIORENTINO (FLORENCE, ITALY)

NEW RESEARCH

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Fabio MARTINI**, Sara PERUSIN***

ABSTRACT

The archaeological area of Via Bruschi, already noted for some twenty years as a centre of ritual (Sarti *et al.* 1987-1988), is among the settlement evidence for Developed Bell Beaker Step 3 (Leonini, Sarti 2008). The study of Bell Beaker settlements in the Florentine area has been carried out through analysis of their relationship to the landscape of the past, by attempting to reconstruct its settings and its sequence of changes identified at a local level. The analysis of the spatial, chronological and functional relationships of the settlement and ritual findings (rendered interactive and dynamic by use of GIS) must, in fact, include the evaluation of the presumed relationships and contacts between the excavated structures. These relationships are not identifiable, at the present time, in a direct way because of the limitations of field research. For this reason, a hypothesis already proposed earlier (Sarti, Martini 2001) has been confirmed for two Bell Beaker areas. Furthermore, it is valid in general on a territorial scale (Pizziolo, Sarti 2006) or where it is possible to apply the concept of "Settlement Unit" (Pizziolo, Sarti 2008). This concept refers to a large context, within which different structural finds can be recognized, belonging to different phases during which the same space was in use. It includes large settlement nuclei (Settlement Units), with functional structures and substructures, all of long duration with the re-use of areas in the close vicinity; Via Bruschi is related to a group of two large settlement areas, Sassaiola and Frilli, referred to as Developed Bell Beaker.

THE RESEARCHES

The tumulus on Via Bruschi in Sesto Fiorentino was investigated in two excavations that were conducted separately and divided in time; in 1986 (directed by L. Sarti and F. Martini) and in 2000-2001 (directed by L. Sarti, supported by P. Fenu) (*fig. 1*). These were partial excavations in terms of the extension of the site since they were dictated by the needs of the Firenze-Bologna railway line construction. Even in the case of the last excavation of 2000-2001, they were connected to the work on the High Speed Train ("*Alta Velocità*"), the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana did not organize a program that would permit an extensive

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and continuous excavation of the area. Therefore, the information unfortunately remains incomplete. In fact each investigated lot is separated from the others by a rather extended barrier where the archaeological levels have been tampered with, to the point that the reconstruction of the Eneolithic structure is not altogether definable. It is truly a shame not to have been able to study further in a systematic way.

One certain fact is that the area of Via Bruschi can be interpreted as a ritual space, probably funerary, that constitutes unique evidence in the local setting as well as in the national one. The research in 2000, which brought to light both another tract of ditch in a westerly direction and an area on the side of the tumulus investigated in 1986, indicate complex spatial organization. In a very brief summary, the investigated area is organized with diverse structures and with a differentiated taphonomy (*fig. 2*):

- small tumulus, already studied, partially subterranean, surrounded by a ditch;
- area with numerous finds (especially fauna, but also ceramic and stone) distributed inside a concentration of elliptical form of 15 square metres;
- concentration defined on one side only by a ditch. The lack of continuity, due to the rearrangement for construction works, with the trench of the tumulus does not allow us to verify whether or not it deals with two segments of only one incision or of two distinct ditches adjacent to each other;
- rather shallow hole, located a short distance from the tumulus, probably associated with an unpreserved emblem, with a small polished stone axe in the foundation installation;
- two wide zones almost devoid of artefacts, to the west and north of the tumulus.

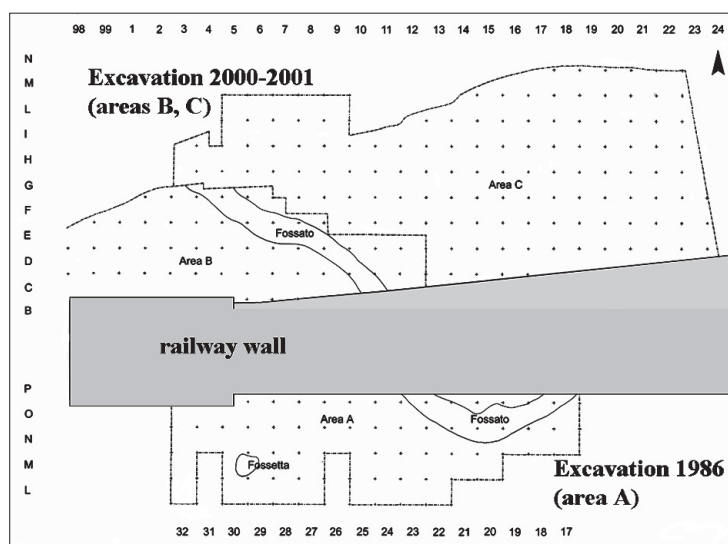


Fig. 1 – Via Bruschi, Sesto Fiorentino (Florence). Map of the excavations undertaken in 1986 and 2000-2001, situation of the three areas excavated and a profile of the two tracts of the ditch (“fossato”) brought to light.

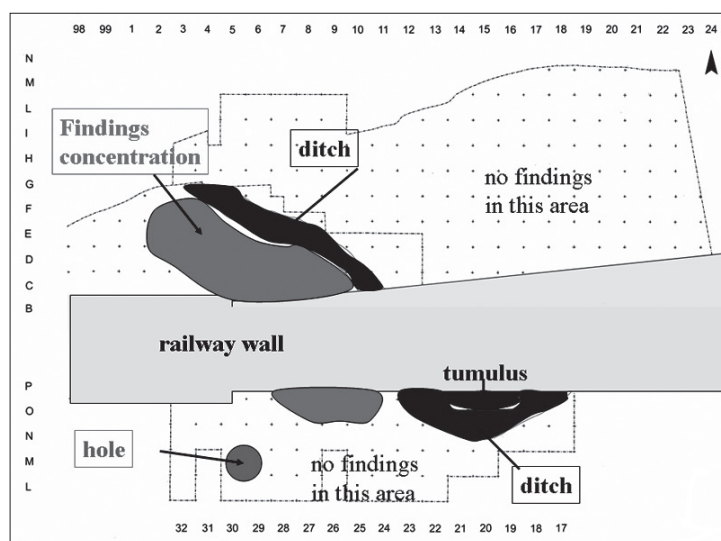


Fig. 2 – Via Bruschi, Sesto Fiorentino (Florence). Situation of the tumulus, ditch, hole and concentrations of finds.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PREVIOUS DATA

The archaeological level was identified in the foundations of the wall constructed along the railway plan following the enlargement of the roadbed of Via Bruschi, a parcel of 54 square metres (area A) lying between the street, which had cut the archaeological levels to the south, and the railway zone. This area A was studied extensively, but the excavation was concerned with only one part of the monument, since around half of it remained under the railway plan.

The tumulus structure, which covers a hollow for a probable burial, was constructed in accordance with a complex and well planned project (Sarti *et al.* 1987-1988). Here we will outline its main stages:

- the hollow was only partially studied, without reaching the bottom; in the portion investigated no human remains were found. In the backfill, clay and coal fragments were collected. The hollow was marked with a hearth, in part only demarcated by stones;
- this hollow is surrounded by a ditch to the depth of around 40cm with a deep vertical cut, on average 1m wide, that seems to have brought to light an elliptical shape at the base of the profile;
- the base of the moat was covered with a discontinuous roadbed (maximum thickness of 12cm) of calcareous pebbles and of sand and minute gravel;
- the large incision, which runs around the perimeter to the ditch, was filled with coal-rich silt that confers a very dark coloration on it. No artefacts were found in the backfill;
- at the top of the ditch was placed a sort of covering of gravel of small and medium sized pebbles, distributed in a non uniform way, following the line of the ditch itself;
- it follows, therefore, the rise of the tumulus itself, made up of fill dirt containing a low quantity of incongruous materials (pottery fragments and minute animal remains). The covering itself of tumulus shape seems to have an almost circular or barely elliptical outline, the maximum dimension verified is 5.20 square metres, its height not over 35cm;
- the ground of the tumulus was then covered over with a lining of calcareous stones, often broken intentionally. A further building operation saw the deposit of a whitish sand around the alluvial fan of the tumulus, following the outline of the ditch lying below, thus forming a sort of ring around the perimeter of the *tumulus*. The chromatic contrast between the white colour of the sand and the dark lime of the ditch was very evident;
- in conclusion, the last construction element; in the sands several small holes were excavated along a curve trajectory that followed the general progression of the monument. In the excavated area four of them have been identified. They are of an almost rectangular shape and at a depth of from 15 to 24cm. It is thought that the function of such holes was to receive the stakes intended not so much for support (these same holes are too shallow), as to delineate and emphasize the shape of the *tumulus*.

The top of the covering only slightly exceeded the frequentation level surrounding the monument and therefore the structure must have been only partially subterranean.

In the excavation of 1986 on the west side of the tumulus a large area was identified as being almost devoid of artefacts except for a limited area close to the wall, with a large quantity of materials and a hole in the free area. This hole proved to be full of medium sized stones under which there was found a small, unused axe in green stone.

NEW RESULTS

The construction works of the High Speed Train (“*Alta Velocità*”) in 2000 allowed the investigation of the area directly north of the limits of the 1986 dig; this deals with a parcel (Area B), placed immediately beyond the railway’s retaining wall. A third lot (Area C) involves the zone of the railway tunnel where we were able to operate only with great difficulty, digging after the bulkheads had already been put up. In area C no finds were discovered.

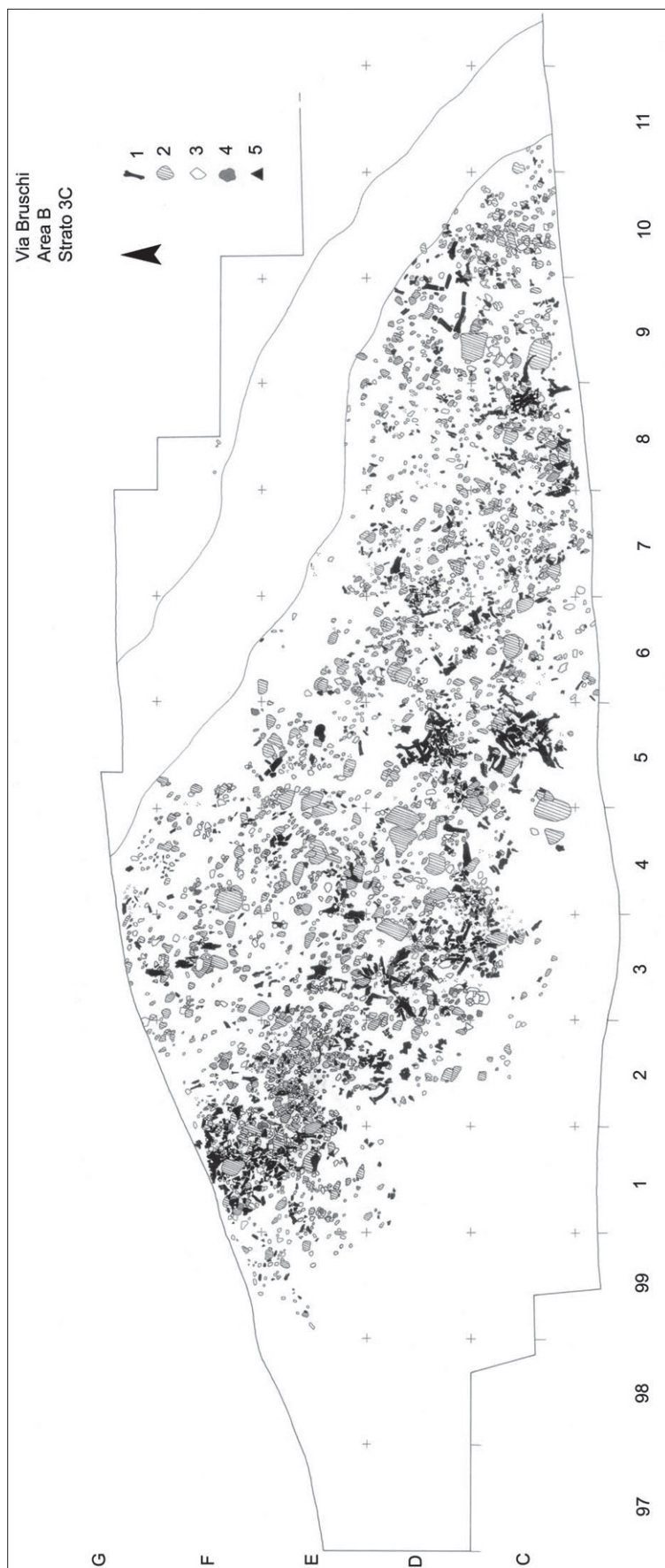


Fig. 3 – Via Bruschi, Sesto Fiorentino (Florence). The concentration of finds in area B. 1: bones;
2: stones; 3: pottery; 4: concocto; 5: lithic industry.

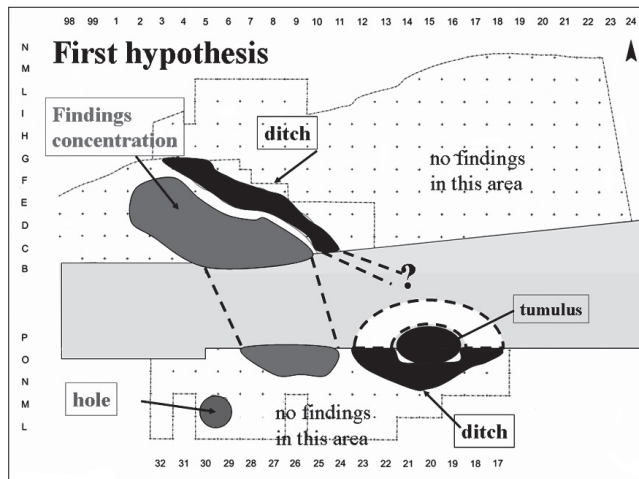


Fig. 4 – Via Bruschi, Sesto Fiorentino (Florence). First hypothesis about the spatial organization of the area.

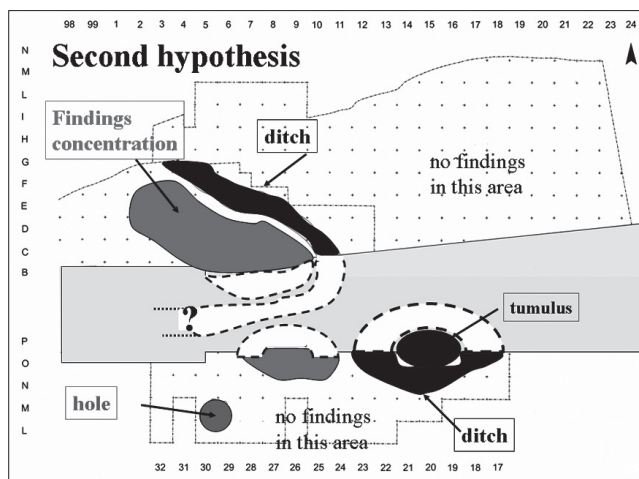


Fig. 5 – Via Bruschi, Sesto Fiorentino (Florence). Second hypothesis about the spatial organization of the area.

In the area B we found a long segment of a ditch and many finds distributed in a non-homogeneous way, with a limited concentration (fig. 3). In the 1986 excavation beyond the large railway wall, the north portion of the tumulus is not preserved. Neither is there a trace of the ditch around the tumulus. In the hypothesis that this surrounded the tumulus with an elliptical shape, as the section brought to light allows us to presume, the north portion must have been taken away by the construction of the large wall. The long segment of ditch ran north-west/south-east and proceeded in a curved line.

One hypothesis (fig. 4) is that this ditch could have been connected to the ditch of the tumulus or, in the direction of the elliptical ditch of the tumulus, delimited a large area with bones, stones and a concentration of rare pottery. A second hypothesis (fig. 5) is that the ditch was curving in the opposite direction, delimiting two smaller areas. But these remain two theoretical hypotheses since the stratigraphic tie is lacking due to the railway works mentioned.

A brief description of the taphonomy and an interpretation of the faunal evidence in Area B, analyzed by S. Perusin, may be interesting. Preserved to the north of the wall is a large area with a strong concentration of bones, stones and rare artefacts (fig. 3). This concentration appears to be related to an analogous zone with remains of fauna and pottery found in 1986. It is an area with an elongated elliptical shape, adjacent to the

ditch. Here we found numerous stones at the base, apparently without a planned out distribution. This is already under evaluation. Besides the pottery fragments, of very poor quality of material and workmanship, on this level there have been revealed some concentrations of faunal remains (fig. 6, 7). The taphonomic study of the faunal remains, which is still in progress, has allowed the highlighting of a special situation, different from the distribution of the rare pottery and stones. In the first place, while the pottery is extremely fragmentary, the faunal remains are in larger pieces but are especially concentrated in accumulations.

We are dealing with a very large majority of *Bos* remains, with a notable disregard for other species, for example, *Sus*, deer and goats. The presence of *Canis*, rather rare, is significant in that it reveals fauna which is very unusual in the local setting. The quantity of *Bos* may be related, in our opinion, to the ox grave of Semitella, a Bell Beaker settlement not so far from the Via Bruschi site.

The rarity of the pottery and lithic industry, the abundance of faunal remains pertaining to a selected species and the distribution of the artefacts in a restricted area are all elements that seem to exclude a residential function of the site and to favour a ritual hypothesis or, at least, a function connected to the tumulus. We should perhaps approach in a similar manner the indications of lithic industry including only few specialized tools (arrowheads and lunates, added to less frequently found generic tools), in varying concentrations in the local Developed Bell Beakers. Recorded also is the presence of rare obsidian and of hyaline quartz.

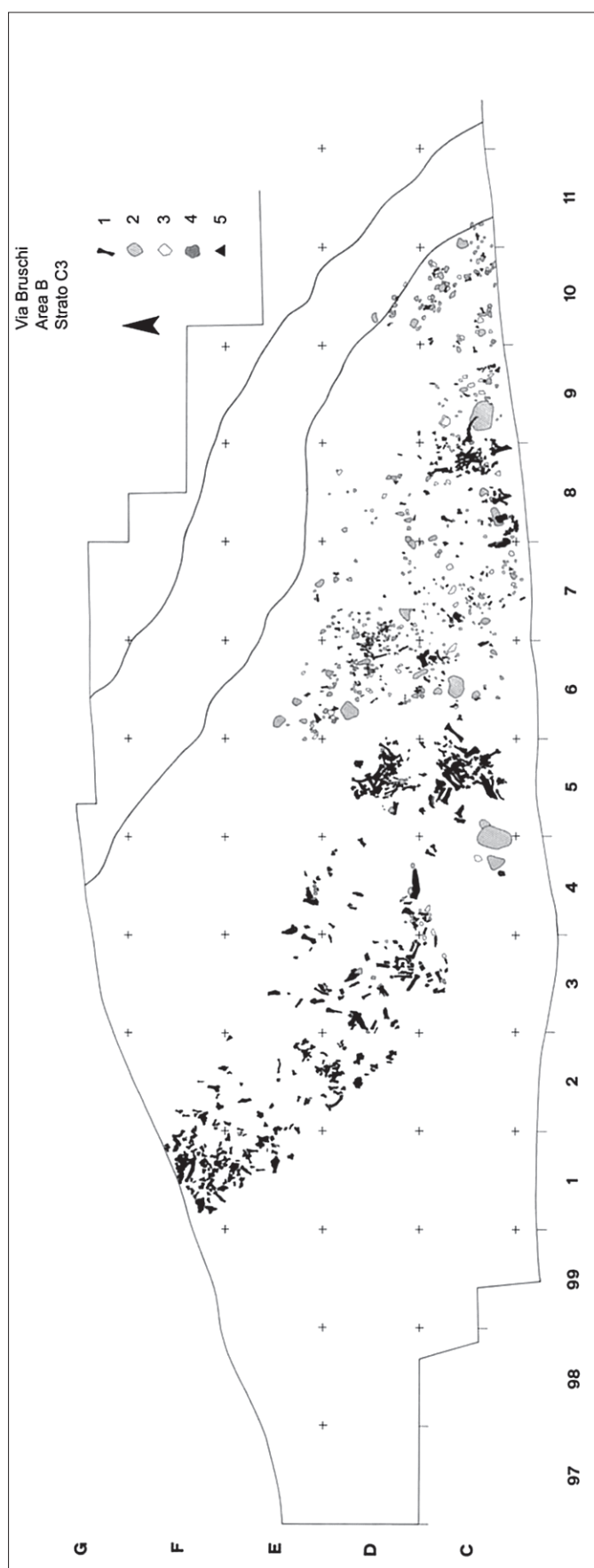


Fig. 6 – Finds at the bottom of the archaeological layer in area B. 1: bones; 2: stones; 3: pottery; 4: concotto; 5: lithic industry.



Fig. 7 – Via Bruschi, Sesto Fiorentino (Florence). Details of the faunal remains in area B (see fig. 6).

The study of artefacts found through the new excavations seems to confirm an attribution to the Developed Bell Beaker. The pottery production, analyzed by L. Sarti and V. Leonini, is represented by small fragments, some decorated with comb design. Among the few shapes that can be reconstructed we note a bowl decorated with triangles directly below the flat thickened rim. The limited repertoire of decorations and shapes fails to furnish detailed chronological indications between Steps 2 and 3 of the local Developed Bell Beakers. The complementary ware, however, would allow us to assign the pottery to Step 3 rather than Step 2. For this subdivision of the Florentine Bell Beaker we refer to recent studies (Leonini, Sarti 2008).

The cultural attribution finds partial confirmation in the radiometric dating, which appears to be among the oldest of the Developed Bell Beaker in the Florentine area: 3960 ± 80 B.P. (cal. 2σ 2674–2201 B.C.). The sample was taken from the bottom of the ditch. Other radiometric dating results are in progress to correlate the different areas of the site.

It may be remembered that the comb pattern, even that with a synthesis of slanting triangles painted in the background, and the bowls with flat thickened rim which are decorated also on the sides, have been attested in the Florentine area since probably the oldest appearance of Bell Beaker evidence, in the Neto-Via Verga context.

Among the complementary ware of Via Bruschi-Area B, an asymmetrical vertical handle with two small conical appendages on the loop as well as bowls with an incurving short rim and scale and brush patterns are the main signs which speak for an attribution to Step 3. This is at the advanced phase of the Developed Bell Beaker, according to the scansion defined in 2006 on the occasion of the “*Archéologie et Gobelets*” conference held in Italy (Baioni *et al.* 2008). In the evolution of the Bell Beakers proposed for Central Italy, Step 3 represents the moment when the Bell Beaker productions see a development more greatly regionalized with the recovery even of the local traditions in common pottery alongside the presence of elements tied to the European Bell Beaker (*Begleitkeramik*); such a moment is best evidenced in Querciola.

The same attribution seems justified for the materials coming from area A, in which significant distinctions do not appear among the scarce artefacts found in the levels of the tumulus or in the ditch in comparison with those, more numerous, found in the area around it. But we reserve our judgement until we have completed the revision of the finds with the continued study of Areas B and C.

As we alluded to in the partial edition of twenty years ago (Sarti *et al.* 1987–1988), the tumulus of Via Bruschi does not at the present moment share any close comparison in Italy in Eneolithic contexts. The Via Bruschi tumulus seems to be connected to the European contexts of both Corded Ware and Bell Beaker Cultures. But there are some structures, like the area on the west side of the tumulus, which seem not to share any similarity with the European Bell Beaker context. Recent publications on contexts in Central and Northern Europe (*e.g.* Turek 2006) which have re-examined the funerary structures under tumuli surrounded by a ditch and other structural features offer some clues for analyzing the Florentine structure; for example, the dimensions of the various structural parts (diameter, height of tumulus, diameter of the ditch), the distance between ditch and trench, and the presence of perimeter postholes.

In addition to these contexts, we can now confirm the reference to the Reno-Meno area and to the Netherlands zone, where, besides the structural details, an attractive analogy can be made with several Dutch *tumuli* in regard to the chromatic contrast (described above) of the diverse coloration of the ditch's backfill. Such a picture of possible and hypothetical interregional relationships is in agreement with the net of relationships of the Developed Bell Beaker in the Florentine area, which shows connections with the Mediterranean area, as well as with the Rodan-Renan area and regions of Central Europe. Defining the moment of the arrival of such influxes remains difficult and, therefore, such a component is better attested to in two steps of the Developed Bell Beakers.

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**TUMULI E STRUTTURE ABITATIVE PRESSO FLAIBANO
NELL'ALTA PIANURA FRIULANA (ITALIA, FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA)
VECCHI E NUOVI DATI**

BURIAL MOUNDS AND DWELLING STRUCTURES NEAR FLAIBANO IN THE UPPER PLAIN
OF FRIULI: OLD AND NEW DATA (ITALY, FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA REGION)

Serena VITRI*, Alberto BALASSO**, Giulio SIMEONI***

RIASSUNTO

Scavi di emergenza nella pianura friulana ad ovest di Udine hanno messo in luce tra fine 2007 e inizi 2008 delle strutture abitative che, insieme al riesame della ceramica rinvenuta nel 1981, offrono nuovi importanti elementi alla rilettura della cronologia del contesto di origine dell'area a tumuli di S. Odorico di Flaibano (Montagnola Tomba di Sopra e di Sotto).

ABSTRACT

Rescue excavations in the plain of Friuli west of Udine, which took place between the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008, brought to light dwelling structures which together with pottery discovered in 1981 provide new important evidence for re-examination of the chronology of the original context of the region of burial mounds of S. Odorico di Flaibano (Montagnola Tomba di Sopra e di Sotto).

Scavi di archeologia preventiva disposti dalla Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici del Friuli Venezia Giulia in occasione della posa in opera nell'alta pianura udinese di un metanodotto¹ hanno messo in luce, tra fine 2007 e inizi 2008, delle strutture abitative che offrono nuovi importanti dati, funzionali anche alla rilettura della cronologia ed alla definizione del contesto di origine dell'area a tumuli di S. Odorico di Flaibano.

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1. Balasso *et al.* 2009

IL TUMULO MONTAGNOLA TOMBA DI SOPRA

Nella zona, situata lungo la sponda sinistra del Tagliamento, Lodovico Quarina negli anni '40 del XX secolo aveva censito due tumuli, definiti nella toponomastica locale Montagnola Tomba di Sotto e Montagnola Tomba di Sopra² (fig. 1). Quest'ultimo, di notevole monumentalità (si trattava infatti di uno dei più grandi tumuli friulani, con diametro di m 30 e altezza di 5,30) (fig. 2), era stato oggetto, a partire verosimilmente dagli anni '50 del XX secolo, di numerosi interventi distruttivi. Tra 1980 e 1981 la zona fu soggetta ad un riordino fondiario che ridisegnò viabilità e delimitazioni agricole di un ampio settore della pianura udinese: il tumulo venne a trovarsi all'incrocio di due strade campestri e fu destinato alla demolizione; la Soprintendenza intervenne fermando i lavori già avviati, ma poté soltanto attuare, nell'aprile del 1981, un intervento archeologico risolutivo. Si eseguì un rilievo planialtimetrico dei resti residui, si praticarono due trincee ortogonali lungo le direzioni cardinali, si operò una pulizia stratigrafica eliminando i resti rimaneggiati, rilevando alcune sezioni sui monconi conservati, si condussero dei sondaggi manuali al centro del rilevato che diedero scarsi risultati in quanto tutta la parte centrale era stata sconvolta da uno scavo abusivo, condotto con mezzo meccanico fino a notevole profondità al di sotto del suolo antico³ (fig. 3).

Al centro dell'ampia piattaforma ovale di ciottoli, di cui si poté ricostruire con qualche approssimazione il perimetro (diam. circa m 20, h mass. cm 80-85, media cm 40-50), si individuò solamente, al di sotto del piano di sistemazione del suolo antico, in prossimità di una dislocazione stratigrafica, la traccia di un palo ligneo. Riteniamo ancora, sebbene non si siano rinvenuti resti umani *in situ* a causa del citato scavo abusivo, che esso vada interpretato come un lembo residuo di una camera funeraria, scavata, almeno in parte, nel suolo antico e dotata di una struttura lignea sorretta da pali infitti.

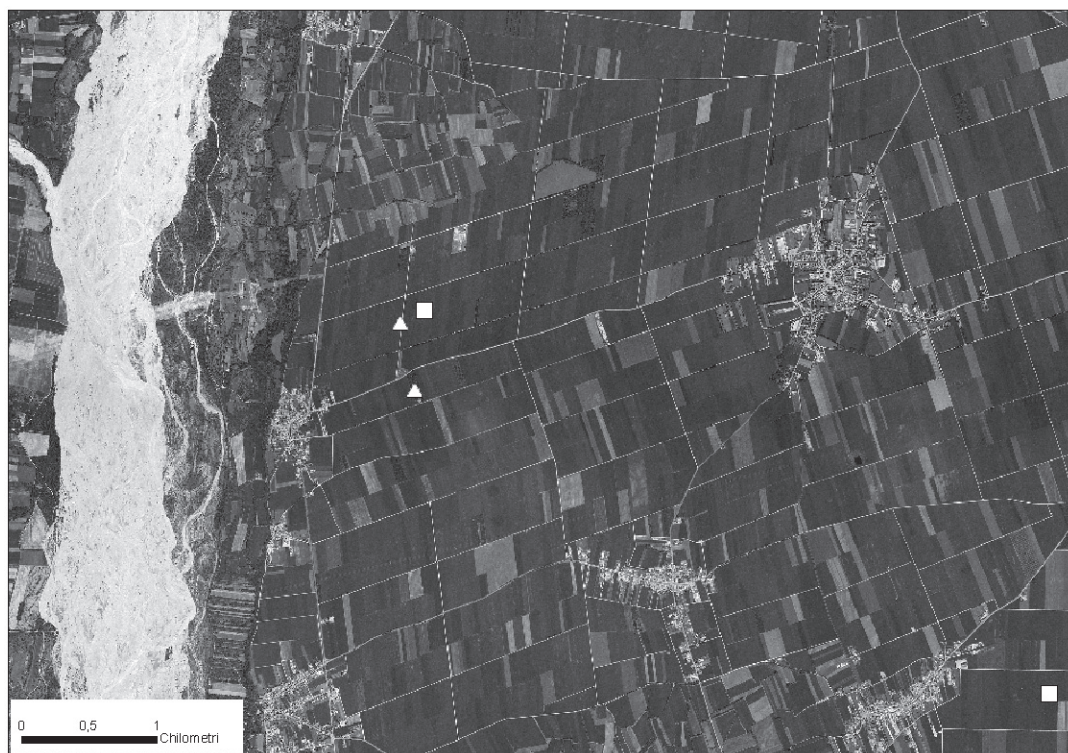


Fig. 1 – Foto da satellite dell'alta pianura udinese ad est del Tagliamento. Triangoli bianchi: tumuli Montagnola Tomba di Sopra e di Sotto; quadrati bianchi: aree abitative individuate sulla pista del metanodotto nel corso dei controlli preventivi.

2. Quarina 1943, p. 84: Tomba di Marangoni di Sotto e Tomba di Marangoni di Sopra, considerata, forse a torto, già violata.
3. Gnesotto, Vitri 1981.



Fig. 2 – Flaibano (UD), il tumulo Montagnola Tomba di Sopra prima delle demolizioni, negli anni '60 del XX secolo.

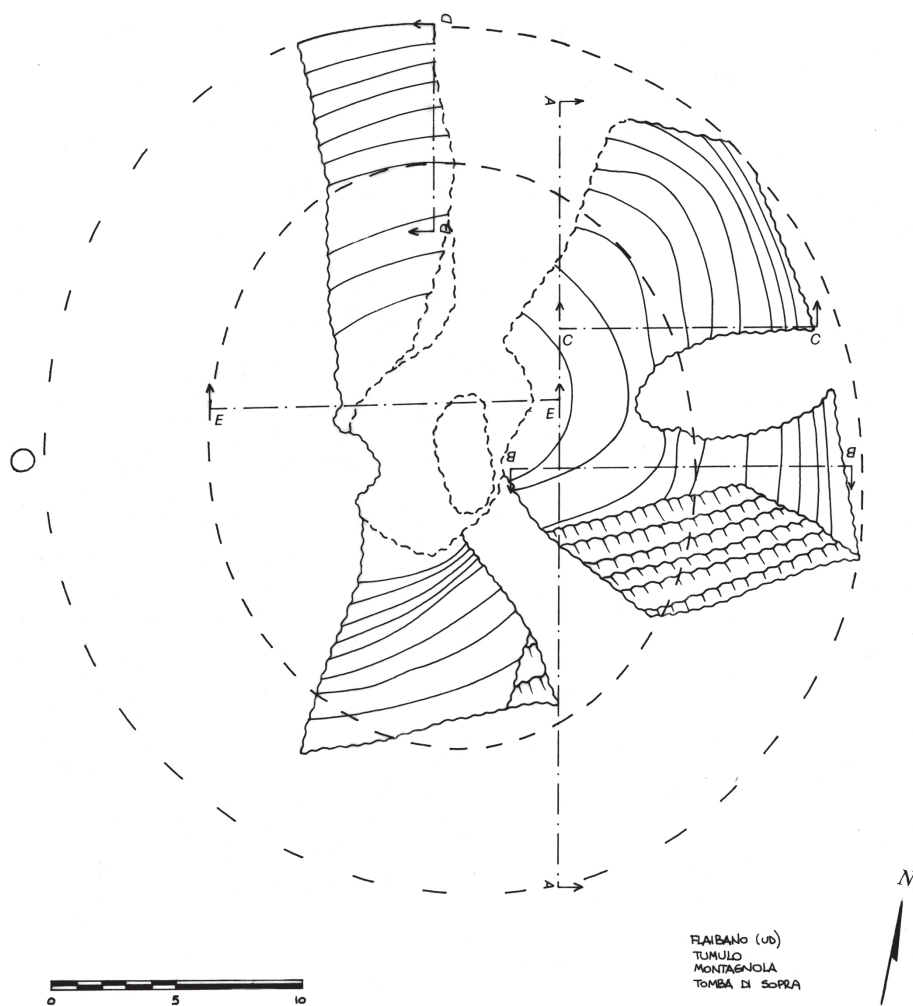


Fig. 3 – Tumulo Montagnola Tomba di Sopra, scavi 1981, planimetria del tumulo prima dello scavo con ubicazione delle linee di sezione e, ad ovest, del pozzetto con ceramica; linee tratteggiate: proposta di ricostruzione, sulla base dei risultati dello scavo, del perimetro del tumulo e della piattaforma interna di ciottoli.

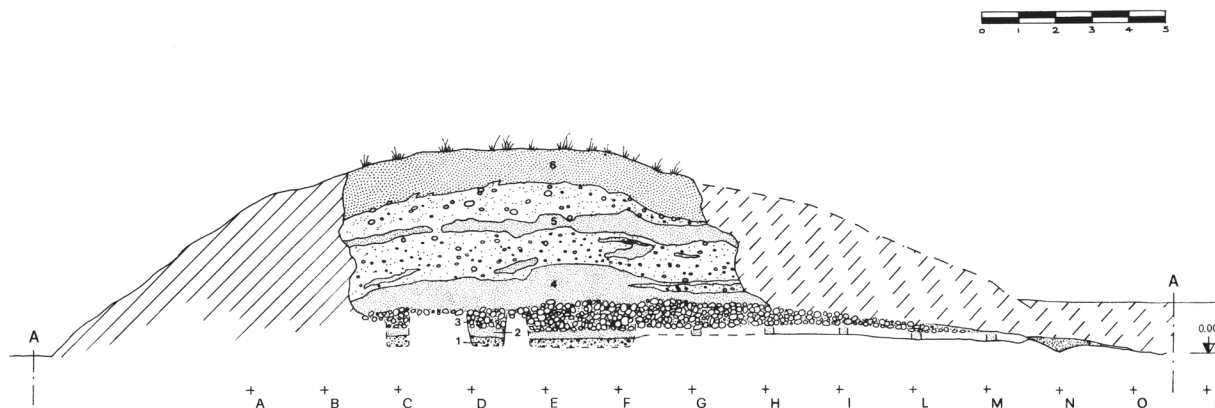


Fig. 4 – Tumulò Montagnola Tomba di Sopra, scavi 1981, sezione nord-sud (A-A): 1. substrato ghiaioso; 2. suolo antico troncato con crostone limonitico; 3. platea in ciottoli; 4. accumulo di argilla sabbiosa, leggermente limosa con frammenti preistorici e minuti carboni; 5. complesso di falde di ghiaia/lenti di terriccio argilloso; 6. strato di copertura in argilla sabbioso-limosa; linee oblique continue: porzione demolita e ricostruita; linee oblique tratteggiate: porzione demolita e parzialmente riempita.

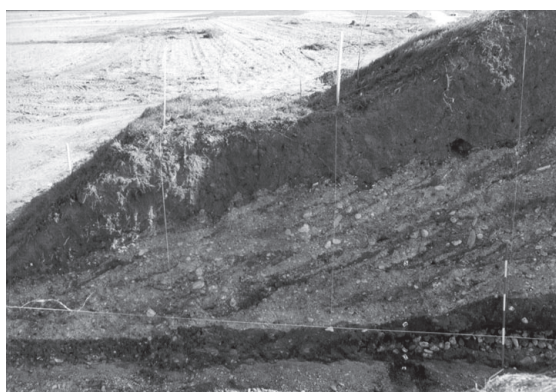


Fig. 5 – Tumulò Montagnola Tomba di Sopra, scavi 1981, sezione est-ovest (B-B), margine est, stratigrafia.

Venne rivolta una particolare attenzione all'analisi, condotta in collaborazione con il geoarcheologo Claudio Balista, delle tecniche costruttive e degli aspetti paleoambientali.

La tecnica costruttiva trova riscontri anche se non puntuali in quella rilevata nel tumulo di Mereto di Tomba, oggetto di scavo da parte dell'Università di Udine,⁴ ed analogie nel sistema di formazione di alcuni aggeri in terra di castellieri di pianura (si vedano in particolare: Castions di Strada, Savalons, Galleriano).⁵ Al di sopra della piattaforma in ciottoli fluviali scelti (unità 3: diam. medio dei ciottoli cm 10-15) collocata sul suolo antico troncato (unità stratigrafica 2), poggiavano due complessi sovrapposti di falde di ghiaia, ghiaietto e ciottoli, alternati a lingue e

lenti di terriccio argilloso bruno scuro e bruno-rosso scuro, con contatto netto con l'unità 4, un accumulo biconvesso di argilla sabbiosa che ricopriva interamente la platea di ciottoli e la cui superficie superiore era appianata e battuta (fig. 4). L'assetto della stratificazione permette di proporre l'ipotesi di un sistema di scarichi condotti a partire dal centro della struttura e con un'estensione radiale sempre più allargata verso la periferia: l'operazione doveva essere effettuata da un piano inclinato di accesso ad una presumibile piattaforma centrale (situato nella parte sudoccidentale già distrutta). Doveva articolarsi in butti di ghiaie ognuno dei quali doveva esser placcato con lingue di terra forse con l'impiego, pur non evidenziabile chiaramente in sezione, di fermi lignei o viminei che avrebbero garantito, insieme alla successiva copertura con un omogeneo e continuo spessore di terriccio argilloso-sabbioso, il mantenimento del profilo originario e la conservazione nel tempo più lungo possibile del monumento (fig. 5).

4. Mereto di Tomba: Borgna, Corazza 2006, col. 303-308; Borgna, Corazza 2007, col. 525-531; Borgna in questo volume.

5. Castions di Strada: Càssola Guida *et al.* 2004, p. 83; Savalons di Mereto di Tomba: Càssola Guida, Corazza 2003, col. 654-656; Galleriano: Càssola Guida, Corazza 2007, col. 534-535.

I frammenti di un piano focato, individuato sulla sommità del rialzo, erano la probabile traccia di roghi accesi forse in particolari ricorrenze religiose.

La cronologia del tumulo è difficilmente definibile: i rari frustoli di ceramica rinvenuti nei livelli interni al tumulo non sono classificabili. Funzionali alla datazione del monumento erano stati considerati negli anni '80 del XX secolo i materiali rinvenuti a breve distanza del margine occidentale ricostruito del tumulo (*fig. 3*), in un pozzetto scavato fin nella ghiaia del substrato, ritenuto una traccia di attività culturali praticate nei pressi del monumento funerario (diam. m 2, profondità conservata m 0,50): la buca conteneva ossa di ovi-caprini molto giovani, e frammenti di recipienti ceramici (cf. *infra*, parte 3) che erano stati riferiti al Bronzo Medio – inizi Recente.⁶ Si era pertanto ritenuto che la tipologia della struttura costruttiva (con ampia platea centrale in ciottoli e probabile casa funeraria lignea centrale) fosse caratteristica di una fase avanzata dell'evoluzione dei tumuli friulani.⁷

Il riesame della ceramica e i ritrovamenti effettuati a circa 200 metri a nord-est del punto in cui era ubicato il tumulo impongono ora un diverso inquadramento.

S. V.

LE STRUTTURE ABITATIVE

Le strutture sono venute in luce nel corso dei controlli preventivi alla posa in opera di un metanodotto condotti tra la fine del 2007 e gli inizi del 2008 ed in seguito scavate stratigraficamente⁸ (*fig. 1*).

Il sito si trova a circa due km dalla sponda sinistra del corso attuale del Tagliamento ed a circa m 200 dal tumulo Montagnola Tomba di Sopra; l'area è caratterizzata dalla presenza di ghiaie di substrato ascrivibili al paleoalveo dello stesso fiume (effetto delle correnti irregolari e dei frequenti abbandoni o migrazioni di canali che caratterizzano questo corso d'acqua) sulle quali si registra il successivo sviluppo di un paleosuolo a matrice argillo-limosa. L'aspetto della pianura è pressoché tabulare per effetto della regolarizzazione delle arature moderne ma lascia intravedere quello che doveva essere un paesaggio più movimentato dal punto di vista altimetrico e che presentava, pur senza grandi variazioni, zone morfologicamente più elevate, forse con affioramento delle ghiaie di substrato, associate ad aree depresse più o meno estese (colmate da accumuli di sedimento fine dove le ghiaie si incontrano a profondità maggiori). Questa caratteristica è percettibile dalle foto aeree della seconda metà del '900 e dalle attuali mappe da satellite (*fig. 1*). L'area oggetto dello scavo si colloca proprio in uno di questi avvallamenti, con approfondimento del substrato, che vede la presenza di almeno 40-50 cm di matrice in accumulo sulle ghiaie. Le strutture si presentano conservate in pochi centimetri di spessore.

La capanna più antica (Struttura 1) è stata la prima ad essere individuata: di forma ellissoidale con orientamento NE-SO, raggiunge i 14 metri di lunghezza per una larghezza massima di 6 (*fig. 6 e 7*).

Il perimetro è evidenziato da una serie di buche di palo, non molto profonde, scavate a distanza relativamente regolare tra loro, la cui lacunosità sul lato est è dovuta a erosione da parte dei mezzi meccanici sulla pista mentre sul lato ovest alla parziale sovrapposizione della Struttura 2.

L'asse mediano è ben delineato da una serie di 5 buche di palo a sostegno del colmo della copertura.

La struttura presenta alcune interessanti particolarità di carattere tecnico: al margine SE alcune buche risultano scavate all'interno di una canaletta poco profonda, di un paio di metri di sviluppo, che ricalca l'andamento del perimetro, mentre al margine nord si è riscontrata la presenza di un doppio ordine di pali perimetrali; quello più interno risulta formato da buche di profondità e diametro minori rispetto a

6. Vitri 1983, p. 84; Urban 1993, 2, p. 398, tav. 4, n. 4, tav. 5, n. 1-3 (erroneamente citati come provenienti da Molinat).

7. Più recentemente il complesso (tumulo e pozzetto) è stato riferito al Bronzo Antico: Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 94.

8. La campagna di scavo è stata condotta dalla P.E.T.R.A. Soc. Coop., sotto la direzione della Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici del Friuli-Venezia Giulia (S. Vitri).



Fig. 6 – Area abitativa a nord-est del Tumulo Montagnola Tomba di Sopra, scavi 2007-2008: i due fondi di capanna in corso di scavo.



Fig. 7 – Planimetria della struttura 1.

quello esterno. Riguardo a questa ultima particolarità sono sostanzialmente due le ipotesi che si possono formulare: la prima è che si tratti di un limite perimetrale più antico, avanzato successivamente di circa 1 metro; benché incompleto esso risulta infatti perfettamente orientato sia con l'asse delle buche centrali che con l'arco perimetrale opposto. La seconda ipotesi, che si ritiene essere la più plausibile, tiene invece conto delle minori dimensioni delle buche dell'arco più interno e del fatto che la risalita delle ghiaie di substrato abbia in qualche modo reso difficile l'impianto dei pali esterni da questo lato della struttura. L'arco più interno sarebbe quindi l'esito di una serie di contropali sistemati a rinforzo della parete per conseguire una maggiore stabilità della stessa. A supporto di questa seconda ipotesi vi sono due particolari importanti: US 54, stesura limo-argillosa che può essere considerata una sottopreparazione ai piani interni della struttura, non oltrepassa il limite dell'arco di buche interno. Se ci si trovasse di fronte ad un ampliamento del sistema ci si aspetterebbe di individuare una stesura che oblitera in parte o scavalca queste buche, stesura che invece non è stata messa in luce. Inoltre si è individuata la presenza, residuale, di un piccolo rilevato a matrice limo-argillosa di non più di 2 metri di lunghezza e dall'andamento vagamente curvilineo (US 53), sistemato *grosso modo* nello spazio che intercorre tra i due archi di buche. Possiamo quindi desumere che, durante la realizzazione della struttura, siano stati messi in opera tali espedienti per dare a questa una maggiore solidità e che azioni di manutenzione siano intervenute anche in seguito vista la reiterazione di alcune buche al margine ovest, esito probabilmente della sostituzione di alcuni pali del perimetro.

Quanto alla superficie interna, questa era interessata dalla presenza di lacerti di stesure limose, unità stratigrafiche 20, 22, 24, 54, la cui unione delimita un'area che si iscrive bene all'interno del perimetro di buche (*fig. 7*). La presenza di queste unità, accomunate dalla matrice limosa, dalla generale compattezza e dalla presenza di una percentuale di ghiaia selezionata nelle dimensioni, è risultata un utile indizio a conferma della plausibilità della figura geometrica della struttura: durante tutte le fasi di scavo e prima della loro asportazione, la colorazione giallastra e la differente capacità di assorbimento dell'acqua e dell'umidità hanno evidenziato nettamente la loro distribuzione sul terreno, identificandole come stesure interne alla struttura attribuibili al piano di calpestio o, più propriamente, alla sua preparazione. Non sono stati individuati focolari o piani scottati all'interno della struttura.

La seconda struttura (Struttura 2: *fig. 8*), pur posteriore alla Struttura 1, è stata indagata in un momento successivo, dopo un consistente ampliamento dell'area di scavo effettuato proprio per consentirne la totale esposizione. Risulta in parziale copertura della prima e differisce nettamente nella forma e nell'impianto costruttivo: di pianta all'incirca trapezoidale, con una lunghezza di 9 metri per una larghezza massima di 7, è delimitata da canalette di fondazione che segnano buona parte del perimetro. Al fondo delle canalette sono state riconosciute numerose buche di palo: alcune, di dimensioni maggiori sia per profondità che per ampiezza, sono disposte a distanze pressoché regolari lungo il perimetro della canaletta, inframmezzate ad un numero ben più consistente di buche minori realizzate a distanza molto più ravvicinata tra loro. La diversità funzionale tra buche grandi e piccole è desumibile non solamente dalle dimensioni e dalla frequenza ma anche dalla posizione di impianto rispetto alla canaletta: le prime infatti ne occupano solitamente i margini mentre le seconde si dispongono al centro. Le buche più grandi ospitavano i pali portanti che concorrevano al sostegno della copertura, mentre quelle minori si riferiscono a pali aventi funzione di sostegno alle pareti. Si osserva la presenza di un numero più consistente di buche, sia interne alla canaletta che esterne, presso gli angoli della struttura, che documentano l'originaria presenza di sistemi di pali che rinforzavano i vertici del perimetro della capanna.

La superficie interna risulta occupata da una forte dispersione di ciottoli di medie dimensioni, allettati in uno spessore di matrice limosa variabile dai 10 ai 15 cm, che risulta essere stato steso successivamente alla posa in opera dei pali, data la tendenza dei ciottoli a disporsi attorno ai perimetri delle buche. Si tratta, con molta probabilità, di una preparazione in vista di un rifacimento pavimentale, ma nulla esclude possa trattarsi del piano di calpestio stesso la cui conformazione non risulterebbe in questo caso molto agevole al passaggio di persone.

La distribuzione interna degli spazi suggerisce una tripartizione nel senso della larghezza o, per lo meno, l'isolamento di un'area di fondo della struttura. È comunque presente un allineamento lungo l'asse mediano della lunghezza che fa perno prevalentemente su una grande buca presso il lato di sud-ovest (*fig. 8*).



Fig. 8 – Planimetria della struttura 2.

Quanto all'ingresso, questo è stato individuato al lato sud-ovest ed è quanto mai particolare: presenta infatti le tracce di due fitte serie di pali, infitti da direzioni opposte fino a due piani di profondità diversa: pare trattarsi di un sistema finalizzato alla creazione di una sorta di intercapedine funzionale all'accesso. Anche in questa struttura non si è individuata una zona con tracce di focatura riferibili ad un focolare.

A. B.

IL MATERIALE FITTILE DALLE STRUTTURE ABITATIVE

Nel corso dello scavo delle due strutture abitative sono stati recuperati esclusivamente frammenti di recipienti ceramici e industria litica in discreta quantità ma di difficile inquadramento (per lo più schegge di selce, alcune delle quali con ritocco marginale, un nucleo ed un frammento di lamella).

Il complesso fittile è, in massima parte, costituito da frammenti di pareti indistinte di dimensioni molto ridotte.

Per quel che riguarda la struttura più antica a pianta ellissoidale, gli unici elementi degni di nota provenienti da unità stratigrafiche interne alla capanna sono un frammento di parete con cordone liscio

orizzontale a cui si collega un cordone obliquo o da cui partiva una presa o un'ansa (*fig. 9, 1*, US 25) e una presa a lingua orizzontale (*fig. 9, 2*, US 22); mentre tra il materiale dalle unità stratigrafiche esterne alla capanna, o raccolto nel corso della pulizia della struttura, si segnalano alcuni frammenti di parete con cordone plastico liscio o digitato (*fig. 9, 3*), frammenti di anse e prese, una delle quali digitata (*fig. 9, 5*), un piccolo frammento d'orlo assottigliato all'esterno, un frammento di fondo piatto, un frammento di ansa ad anello (*fig. 9, 4*).

Dalla struttura più recente, a pianta trapezoidale, proviene un numero maggiore di elementi ceramici riconoscibili. In particolare si segnalano un frammento di scodella con parete rientrante e ansa tubolare che arriva all'orlo e un piccolo frammento di orlo di scodella, appiattito superiormente, leggermente ispessito all'esterno, di impasto fine, recuperati nell'US 110 di riempimento della canaletta perimetrale (*fig. 9, 6 e 7*). Si possono ancora menzionare alcuni frammenti di parete con cordone liscio (*fig. 9, 11*, US 110) o digitato e, in un caso, decorato a tacche oblique (*fig. 9, 12*), una piccola bugna con impressione centrale d'impasto fine (*fig. 9, 13*), e alcuni frammenti di orlo tra cui uno breve, verticale, impostato su parete espansa (*fig. 9, 10*), un frammento di orlo diritto, assottigliato, con margine arrotondato, impostato su parete diritta munita di cordone plastico liscio a sezione piano convessa (*fig. 9, 9*), ed ancora un piccolo frammento di orlo tagliato obliquamente all'interno, distinto all'esterno da una leggera solcatura (*fig. 9, 8*). Le prese sono a lingua, in un caso con una sorta di pizzicatura centrale, i fondi piani, eventualmente a tacco (*fig. 9, 15-16*).

L'istituzione di raffronti risulta sicuramente più agevole per il materiale fittile proveniente da unità riferibili alla capanna più recente a pianta trapezoidale.

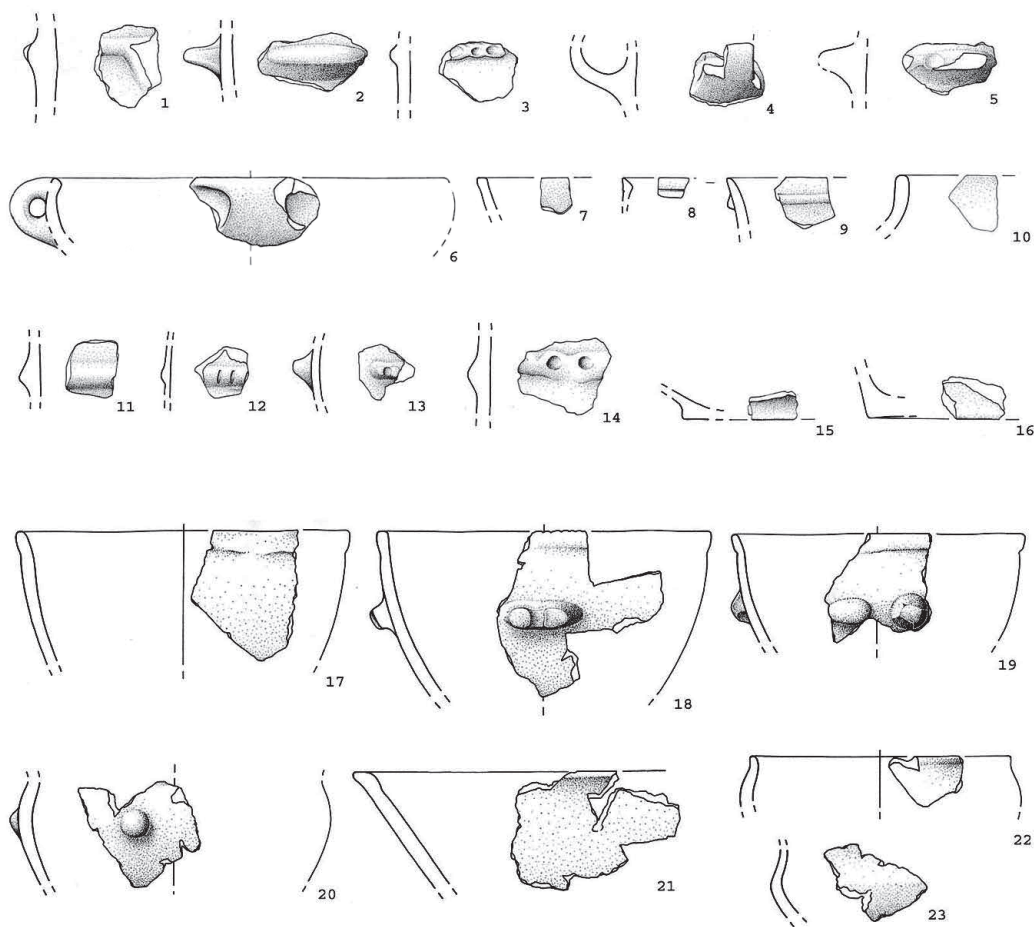


Fig. 9 – Scelta di frammenti ceramici dalle strutture 1 (n. 1-5) e 2 (n. 6-16) e dal pozzetto sul margine occidentale del Tumulo Montagnola Tomba di Sopra (n. 17-23).

La scodella con ansa all'orlo (fig. 9, 6) trova le similitudini migliori in recipienti provenienti da Založnica e Parte, abitati della Palude di Lubiana (Ljubljansko barje)⁹ e da contesti tombali austriaci e boemi, da Henzing (Niederösterreich) e da Velké Přílepy – Kamýk, non distante da Praga.¹⁰

Henzing è riferito all'orizzonte Oggau-Wipfing o Ragelsdorf-Oberbierbaum-Oggau-Wipfing del più recente Campaniforme austriaco (GBK III o GBK B2 a), in fase con l'orizzonte Protoaunjetitz.¹¹ Gli abitati di Parte e Založnica, entro la cui produzione ceramica si possono trovare confronti anche per il frammento di orlo superiormente appiattito (fig. 9, 7),¹² sono attualmente attribuiti alla Cultura Somogyvár-Vinkovci, sviluppatasi in ambito danubiano-carpatico e diffusasi verso settentrione con influssi fino in Moravia e Boemia tra la *Frühbronzezeit* (FBZ) I e II della cronologia ungherese.¹³

Ed ancora, per quanto il frammento sia molto piccolo, per modellazione, l'orlo con incisione esterna della fig. 9, 8 è raffrontabile con orli attestati su scodelle provenienti da Škarin Samograd (Croazia, nelle vicinanze di Sebenico) e dalla Grotta del Mitreo nel Carso triestino (Strato 5).¹⁴ L'esemplare croato è riferito da Marović e Čović alla seconda fase della Cultura della Cetina (secondo Maran la Cetina vera e propria);¹⁵ gli orli della Grotta del Mitreo sono invece ricondotti da Govedarica tra gli elementi della così detta seconda fase del tipo classico della Cultura di Lubiana,¹⁶ corrispondente all'ultimo orizzonte del Campaniforme europeo e, di conseguenza, al periodo Protoaunjetitz.

In termini assoluti l'arco cronologico in cui collocare, in base ai confronti individuati, la struttura trapezoidale di Flaibano potrebbe estendersi tra ca. la metà del XXV sec. a.C. (momento in cui si colloca la maggiore attività costruttiva di Založnica) e i primi secoli del II millennio a.C. (termine inferiore per Cetina 2).¹⁷ Dal momento però che l'orizzonte Oggau-Wipfing e la seconda fase di Lubiana classica, entrambi contemporanei all'orizzonte Protoaunjetitz, sono datati tra 2350 e 2250 a.C., che le datazioni, attualmente disponibili, per l'attività di costruzione degli abitati sloveni di Parte e Založnica sono comprese tra ca. la metà del III mill. a.C. e i primi secoli della seconda metà dello stesso,¹⁸ e che la cultura di Somogyvár-Vinkovci, che trova la sua fase di espansione nel suo orizzonte A2, post-Vučedol, dovrebbe estendersi fino alla FBZ II, cioè in cronologia assoluta entro la seconda metà del III mill. a.C., pare preferibile, sebbene lo stato attuale delle conoscenze per il Friuli sia molto lacunoso e non consenta, a priori, di escludere la possibilità di una permanenza di elementi di tradizione orientale, datare le ceramiche della capanna trapezoidale all'incirca tra il 2400/2350 e il 2200, e considerare l'orlo con incisione esterna individuato su forme Cetina un elemento attardatosi in ambito adriatico ma originariamente proveniente dalla cultura di Ljubljana.¹⁹

Il materiale ceramico riferito alla struttura ellittica non fornisce purtroppo indicazioni utili dal punto di vista cronologico; l'evidenza stratigrafica non ha segnalato una netta cesura tra le due fasi abitative, e ciò potrebbe essere indizio solamente di una leggera anteriorità della prima capanna rispetto alla seconda, che quindi potrebbe darsi tra l'Eneolitico finale e le prime fasi del BA; il netto cambio di planimetria e tecnica costruttiva tra le due strutture lascia aperto però ancora qualche dubbio sulla datazione di quella più antica.

I confronti tipologico-strutturali non sembrano, allo stato attuale delle ricerche, fornire elementi molto precisi di datazione: capanne di forma ovale con pali centrali sono attestate soprattutto in contesti eneolitici

9. Velušček, Čufar 2003, tav. 8, 1; Harej 1978, fig. 80, 3; Harej 1987, tav. 5, 11.

10. Vedi rispettivamente Neugebauer, Neugebauer-Maresch 2001, fig. 5, 5; Skružný *et al.* 2000, tav. 5, 1 e 6, 2; Turek 2006, fig. 81, 1 e 82, 2.

11. Neugebauer, Neugebauer-Maresch 2001; Bertemes, Heyd 2002.

12. Velušček, Čufar 2003, fig. 86, 4.

13. *Ibid.*; Dimitrijević 1982; Kalicz-Schreiber 1991.

14. Vedi rispettivamente Marović-Čović 1983, fig. 14, 8; Stacul 1972, fig. 5, 1-2; Montagnari Kokelj, Crismani 1997, fig. 12, 102.

15. Maran 1998, p. 323.

16. Govedarica 1989, p. 46.

17. Kaiser, Forenbaher 1999, p. 316.

18. Velušček, Čufar 2003; Velušček, Čufar 2002.

19. Govedarica 1989.

(fino all'inizio del Bronzo Antico) sia in Italia che nell'Europa centro-orientale: per l'Italia tirrenica si vedano ad esempio le capanne subellittiche di Gricignano di Aversa in Campania (facies Laterza)²⁰ e Maccarese in Toscana,²¹ per l'area danubiano-carpatica e balcanica si vedano quelle di Vučedol e Csepel.²² Forme rettangolari o trapezoidali, anche con canaletta di fondazione si conoscono in area danubiano-carpatica dall'antica età del rame (p. es. Pottenbrunn in Austria: antica/media età del rame).²³ In area padana alcuni interessanti esempi sono inquadrabili tra tardo Eneolitico e inizi del Bronzo Antico (p. es. Castenaso presso Bologna, riferito al Campaniforme evoluto e/o Epicaniforme).²⁴

IL MATERIALE FITTILE DAL POZZETTO PRESSO IL TUMULO MONTAGNOLA TOMBA DI SOPRA

Decisamente più alta è la datazione che si propone per la ceramica del pozzetto rinvenuto nel 1981 alla periferia del tumulo spianato di Montagnola Tomba di Sopra. I recipienti più completi recuperati, sostanzialmente scodelle con vasca profonda e orlo distinto, olle e ciotole (fig. 9, 17-23), recentemente riesaminati dallo scrivente, trovano infatti dei buoni termini di confronto soprattutto nella produzione fittile di abitati palafitticoli e non palafitticoli e di siti in grotta della Slovenia come Maharski prekop, Blatna Brezovica, Notranje Gorice, Ptuj, Acijev spodmol e Gradec pri Mirna, tutti comunque riferiti alla *facies* dell'Eneolitico sloveno di Maharski prekop, parzialmente contemporanea e poi successiva all'orizzonte sloveno definito HKBV,²⁵ con ceramica a *furrowed incisions* o *Furchenstich*, datata ca. alla seconda metà del IV millennio a.C.²⁶

G. S.

CONCLUSIONI

Non pare facile comporre un quadro coerente degli elementi descritti, che potrebbero essere attribuiti ad un unico complesso abitativo-funerario con più fasi, ma anche a cicli successivi di frequentazione.

Il recente riesame della ceramica proveniente dal pozzetto posto ai margini occidentali del tumulo Montagnola Tomba di Sopra (tardo IV millennio?) mette in dubbio il collegamento con il monumento nella sua fase costruttiva o in successivi momenti di attività sacrale, suggerendo l'attribuzione ad una precedente fase abitativa o culturale. Per il monumento funerario l'unica possibilità di datazione proviene da confronti strutturali: allo stato attuale delle ricerche le affinità più strette sono state registrate con il tumulo di Mereto di Tomba la cui sepoltura è databile al BA (1889-1670 a. C.²⁷).

20. Gricignano: Fugazzola Delpino *et al.* 2003, p. 199-214, fig. 1-2: tra tardo Eneolitico e BA iniziale le capanne possono raggiungere i 14 metri, lunghezza attestata a Flaibano.

21. Maccarese: Manfredini 2002, p. 58-73, fig. 20.

22. Vučedol: Forenbaher 1994; Csepel: Endrődi, Pásztor 2006, fig. 1.

23. Pottenbrunn: Urban 1989, p. 83, 86.

24. Castenaso: Ferrari, Steffè 2008, fig. 1.

25. Velušček 2004b, p. 231-261.

26. Per i confronti vedi: Maharski prekop (Bregant 1975, tav. XV, 9; Velušček 2004a, fig. 4.2.9, tipo S7), Blatna Brezovica (Korošec 1963, tav. 21, 2; 22, 8 e 25, 14), Notranje Gorice (Velušček 2003, fig. 5.2.6, 11, e annessa bibliografia), Ptuj (Vomer-Gojković 1991) e Acijev spodmol (Turk *et al.* 1992, tav. 3, 12) Gradec pri Mirna (Dular 2001, tav. 3, 6).

27. Borgna *et al.* c.s.

Un'origine nel pieno o almeno tardo Eneolitico è presumibile per le strutture insediative (isolate, o forse inserite in un più ampio abitato) messe in luce tra 2007 e 2008.

È stato quindi accertato che la pianura intorno a Flaibano, dove sorgevano almeno due tumuli,²⁸ fu frequentata, con modalità ancora non definibili, forse già dalla fine del IV millennio; il dato, di grande interesse, pur non offrendo nuovi elementi sicuri per la datazione delle sepolture, suggerisce comunque di ricercare l'origine dei tumuli funerari dell'alta pianura friulana nella frequentazione di età eneolitica, confermando gli indizi già raccolti in altre località.

S. V.

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I TUMULI DEL FRIULI OCCIDENTALE

UN AGGIORNAMENTO DELLE CONOSCENZE

THE BURIAL MOUNDS OF WESTERN FRIULI: AN UPDATE

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RIASSUNTO

Nel Friuli occidentale, compreso tra i fiumi Livenza e Tagliamento, sono storicamente documentati molti rilievi artificiali – più numerosi e concentrati in alta pianura, più rari in bassa pianura – in gran parte distrutti nel corso dei riordini fondiari tra gli anni 60 e 80 dello scorso secolo. Si presenta qui un censimento delle evidenze documentate dalla cartografia storica consultata, dalla raccolta di dati di L. Quarina (1938-1940) e dalla letteratura archeologica.

Gran parte dei rilievi artificiali, soprattutto dell'alta pianura, sono in realtà cumuli di pietre connessi alla lavorazione dei campi (masiere), che in diversi casi hanno coperto o inglobato materiali protostorici e romani già presenti in area. Alcuni tumuli invece sono con certezza strutture sepolcrali di età romana. Solamente il tumulo individuato in loc. Carbonera – Prati del Campanile (Maniago) ha finora restituito materiali protostorici (Bronzo Medio) di probabile pertinenza funeraria, mentre sono pochissime le evidenze ancora esistenti che si potrebbe supporre costituiscano per forma, dimensioni e collocazione sul territorio delle strutture funerarie monumentali di età protostorica: di esse si auspicano la conservazione e l'indagine scientifica.

ABSTRACT

In western Friuli, which lies between the Livenza and Tagliamento rivers, many artificial raised areas or elevations were recorded in the past (more numerous and more concentrated in the upper part of the plain, less so in the lower part), and have since been mostly destroyed by land alterations and divisions between the 1960s and the 1980s. Presented here is an inventory based on the historical cartography consulted, on the data gathered by L. Quarina (1938-1940) and on archaeological publications.

A large number of the artificial elevations, especially in the upper part of the plain, are in fact piles of stones related to work in the fields (masiere), which have in several cases covered or included protohistorical and Roman material. Some other mounds are certainly funerary structures of the Roman period. So far only the mound identified at Carbonera – Prati del Campanile (Maniago) has produced protohistorical material (Middle Bronze Age) whose funerary nature is probable, but little evidence survives to indicate the existence of monumental funerary structures in this region, in terms of form, size and location: conservation and scientific research are needed.

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Il territorio del Friuli occidentale, compreso nella provincia di Pordenone, è costituito da una fascia montana e pedemontana, dall'alta pianura e dalla bassa pianura: l'alta pianura – solcata dai torrenti Cellina, Colvera, Meduna e dal fiume Tagliamento – è caratterizzata da terreni in genere ghiaiosi, permeabili e poco produttivi; la bassa pianura, delimitata a nord dalla fascia delle risorgive, è generalmente argillosa, ricca d'acque e fertile.

In questo territorio, soprattutto nell'alta pianura, era decisamente significativa fino ad una trentina d'anni fa la presenza di rilievi e presunti tumuli. Ne proponiamo in questa sede un censimento (*tab. 1; fig. 1*), basato su fonti di cartografia storica, sui dati raccolti da Lodovico Quarina alla fine degli anni '30 e sulla

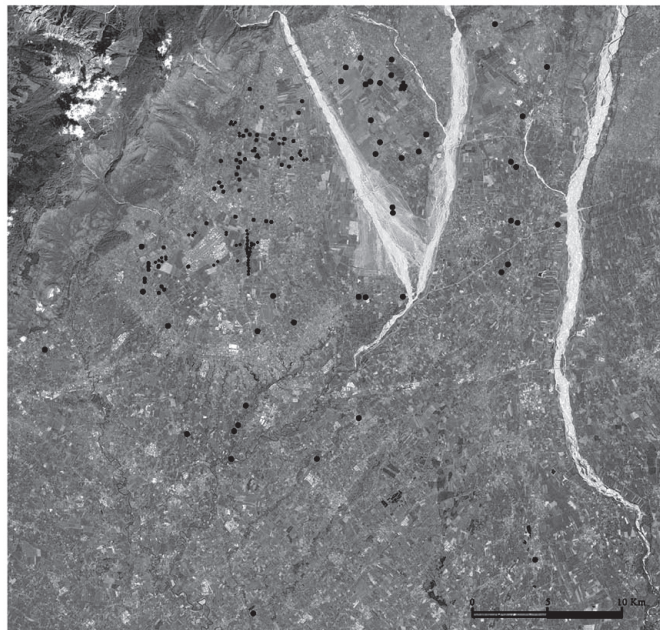


Fig. 1 – Distribuzione dei rilievi artificiali del Friuli occidentale: sono riportate le evidenze desunte dalla cartografia storica consultata, dal manoscritto del Quarina e dalla letteratura archeologica.

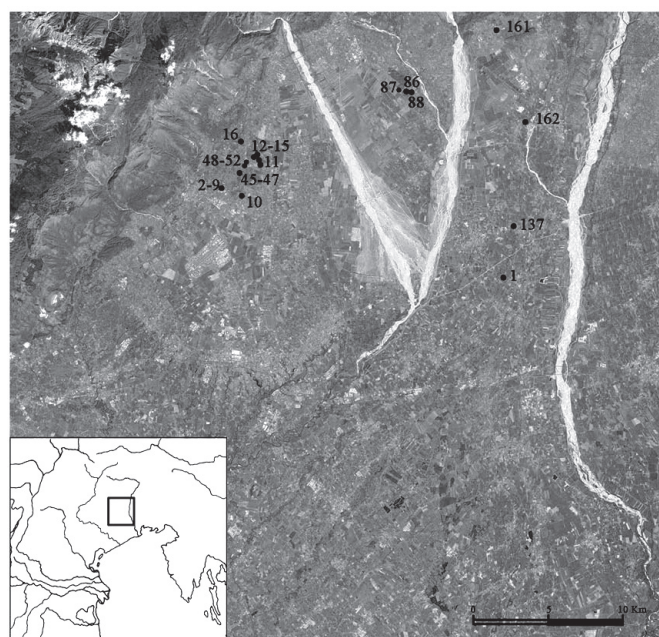


Fig. 2 – Distribuzione dei rilievi con tracce funerarie di età romana e dei tumuli di accertata o presunta età protostorica del Friuli occidentale; per la numerazione cf. tabella 1.

letteratura archeologica disponibile, con l'obiettivo anche di individuare quali tra queste evidenze possano essere fatte risalire ad età protostorica. Nella carta topografica di Anton von Zack,¹ realizzata a fini militari tra il 1798 e il 1805, il territorio pordenonese risultava ricco di queste evidenze (*fig. 1*), in particolare l'alta pianura, costellata da numerosi rilievi artificiali di varie dimensioni e forma (per lo più emisferica o allungata), spesso associati tra loro in file o a gruppi o, più raramente, isolati. Nella bassa pianura, invece, la presenza di tali elementi era decisamente ridotta e questi risultavano talora posizionati nelle vicinanze degli argini fluviali.

Una situazione analoga venne registrata tra il 1938 e il 1940 dal Quarina – un ufficiale del Genio Militare che aveva operato nell'ampio territorio pertinente, all'epoca, alla provincia di Udine – che raccolse le attestazioni dei toponimi indicanti un rilievo (*Tombe, Mutare, Motte, Cicole*) e svolse l'esame autoptico dei "tumuli" di cui gli era stata confermata l'esistenza; i dati così raccolti confluirono in un manoscritto conservato nella Biblioteca Civica "V. Joppi" di Udine² e, in parte, in un successivo contributo nella rivista locale "Ce fastu?"³.

Delle 314 attestazioni registrate nel suo manoscritto dal Quarina 127 si trovano nel territorio della provincia di Pordenone, istituita quaranta anni fa; di queste solamente quella situata in loc. San Rocco, a Tauriano (Spilimbergo), venne segnalata anche nell'articolo del 1943.⁴

Delle 127 possibili strutture artificiali elencate dal Quarina per il territorio del Friuli occidentale, 47 erano identificate con un toponimo: *Motta/Mùtera* ed alcune loro varianti (20 evidenze),⁵ *Tomba/Tombe* (12), i sinonimi *Colle/Collina/Cicul/Ciculis*, che indicano dei rilievi naturali, ed alcuni toponimi riferibili alla forma dei "tumuli" (*Tarònt*⁶ e *Montagnola*) o ai materiali di cui erano costituiti (*Clapàs*).⁷

Dell'esistenza di 16 di queste strutture il Quarina non trovò alcuna conferma,⁸ mentre 6 erano state demolite prima che egli iniziasse il suo censimento; 7, invece, risultarono essere dei rilievi naturali.

Delle rimanenti, 81 vennero da lui identificate sicuramente come *masière*, termine locale che indica mucchi di sassi o di pietrame collocati ai margini dei terreni agricoli o dei pascoli,⁹ e 8 risultarono essere delle strutture innalzate nel corso del XIX o nei primi decenni del XX sec. per l'abbellimento di parchi e giardini signorili (i "belvedere").

Il Quarina riteneva potessero essere dei tumuli solamente tre rilievi identificati nel comune di Spilimbergo, di cui solo quello di Tauriano, in loc. San Rocco, è ancora visibile.

La demolizione di queste strutture fu in gran parte l'esito del rimodellamento dei terreni agricoli e dei riordini fondiari: molte di esse vennero spianate sistematicamente dalla fine degli anni '60, soprattutto nella bassa pianura, e, dai primi anni '80, anche nell'alta pianura pordenonese. Quando fu possibile un riscontro sul terreno dopo la loro demolizione, esse risultarono in gran parte delle *masière*,¹⁰ cumuli di pietra la cui realizzazione nell'ambito della preparazione dei campi all'aratura persiste tutt'oggi (*fig. 4*).

1. Von Zack 2005.

2. Provincia di Udine. *Tombe, Mutare, Motte, Cicole, ecc. Elementi e informazioni raccolte negli anni 1938-1939-1940. Raccogliatore L. Quarina*, ms. 2605. Il Quarina elencò in questo manoscritto le località in cui avrebbero potuto avere sede dei tumuli. Di queste fornì le coordinate geografiche e forma e dimensioni delle strutture di cui poté verificare l'esistenza.

3. Quarina 1943.

4. Quarina 1943, p. 80 e 85.

5. Il termine *Motta – Mùtera* in friulano – indica dei rilievi artificiali, che in alcuni casi possono risalire ad epoca protostorica, come la *Mùtera* di Colfrancui (Oderzo, Treviso), in cui furono individuate delle sepolture riferibili ad un momento avanzato del VI sec. a.C. (G. Gambacurta in Salerno *et al.* 1996, p. 171-173).

6. L'aggettivo friulano deriva dal latino *rotundus* (con metatesi) ed indica una forma circolare o emisferica (v. Desinan 1982, p. 108).

7. *Clap* in Friulano significa sasso (sui toponimi che ne derivano, v. Desinan 1982, p. 322).

8. Di queste, 15 segnalazioni riguardavano la bassa pianura pordenonese.

9. Pirona *et al.* 1992, p. 578; il Desinan (1982, p. 117) le definisce "cumuli da spietramento". *Masière* è ritenuta la forma veneta di *masèria*, voce friulana derivante dal latino *maceria* (Borin 2007, p. 27).

10. Fondamentale per l'alta pianura pordenonese è l'attività di ricerca e di controllo del territorio svolta dal Gruppo Archeologico Cellina-Meduna "co. Giuseppe di Ragogna" (v., da ultimo, D'Agnolo *et al.* 2006).

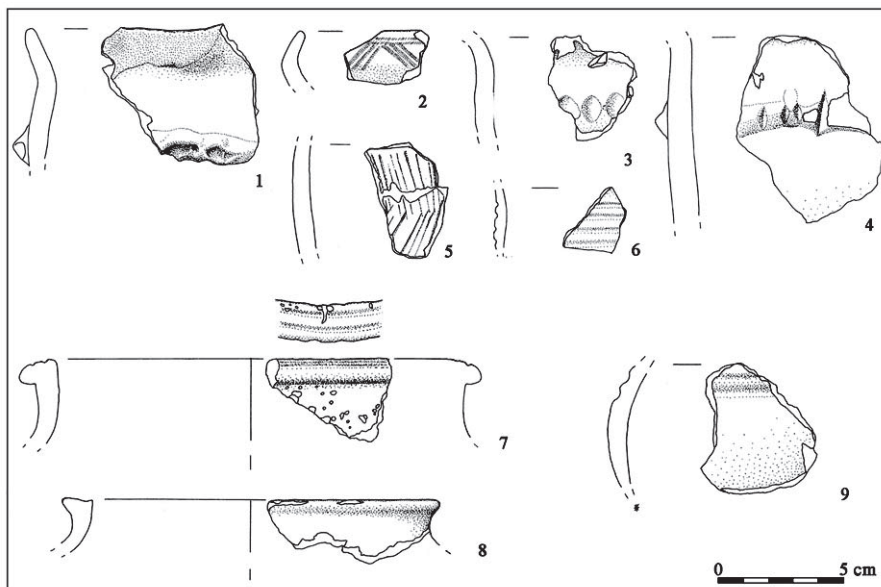


Fig. 3 – Materiali ceramici riferibili al Bronzo Finale-prima età del Ferro (XI-X sec. a.C.) da Aviano, loc. Riva de Barés (n. 1-6), e ai primi secoli della seconda età del Ferro (fine VI-V sec. a.C.) da Aviano, loc. Stabilimento ITA (n. 7-9).



Fig. 4 – Una futura masièra a lato di terreno agricolo spietrato prima dell'aratura (Maniago, loc. Molinat-Prati del Campanile).



Fig. 5 – Il tumulo protostorico individuato in loc. Molinat-Prati del Campanile (Maniago).

Se eliminiamo dalla carta del territorio (*fig. 1*) tutte le evidenze che, con certezza, sappiamo non essere dei tumuli, rimangono ben poche strutture, alcune delle quali sicuramente riferibili ad epoca romana, inquadrabili tra l'avanzato I sec. a.C. e il I sec. d.C. e in età tardoimperiale (*fig. 2*): si tratta di un piccolo tumulo legato ad alcune tombe a cremazione della necropoli di Grion-Presutta (Aviano)¹¹ (*fig. 2, n. 10*), di due tumuli distrutti alla fine degli anni '80 nell'area del Molinat-Prati del Campanile (Maniago) (*fig. 2, n. 87-88*) e di una sepoltura monumentale che conteneva due inumati scoperta ad Arzene¹² (*fig. 2, n. 1*). Nel territorio avianese, inoltre, in

11. Sulla necropoli di San Martino di Campagna, Vitri 1990; sui tumuli della loc. Molinat-Prati del Campanile, Egidi 1994, p. 103-104 e 107-108; su quello di Arzene, Villa 1999.

12. Il ricorso a strutture tombali a tumulo in età romana sembra documentato, ma in misura minore, anche nell'alta pianura udinese, secondo quanto registrato nel manoscritto di Ludovico Quarina (ad Aiello, loc. *Motta*; a Basiliano, loc. *Tomba di Vissandone*; a Nimis, loc. *Tombis e Tombarussis*). Il probabile riutilizzo, invece, di un tumulo più antico per una sepoltura d'età romana nel territorio di Mereto (loc. *Tumbarè*) è tramandato da una notizia ottocentesca di Gian Domenico Bertoli, riportata dal Quarina. Un caso analogo è forse attestato anche nella alta pianura pordenonese grazie al rinvenimento di una fibula Gurina in terreno fortemente carbonioso durante il parziale spianamento di un tumulo (D'Agnolo *et al.* 2006, p. 87, sito Barés/Cavarezza 23) (*tab. 1, n. 125*).

seguito alla distruzione, nel corso dei lavori agricoli, di alcuni rilievi di forma irregolarmente ellissoidale e di dimensioni ridotte sono stati raccolti materiali d'età romana; non è possibile, però, a causa delle circostanze dei rinvenimenti, chiarire quale sia la relazione tra questi reperti e i piccoli "tumuli".

Oltre a quelli d'epoca romana è stato indagato anche un altro tumulo, l'unico che attualmente possa essere ritenuto indiscutibilmente protostorico, che si trova anch'esso in loc. Molinat-Prati del Campanile. Non è stato finora oggetto di uno scavo sistematico, ma solo di un piccolo scasso effettuato negli anni '80, in seguito al quale si recuperarono pochi frammenti ceramici, due spirali in bronzo ed una fusaiola in terracotta, per i quali fu proposta da Serena Vitri una attribuzione alla media età del bronzo.¹³

Nelle immediate vicinanze del rilievo artificiale venne individuato un pozzetto, il cui riempimento fu scavato, nella parte inferiore, dalla Soprintendenza Archeologica regionale; dalla struttura proviene una discreta quantità di frammenti ceramici, riferibili ad un numero abbastanza limitato di vasi del tardo Bronzo Medio – inizio Bronzo Recente 1 (XIV-XIII sec. a.C.).

Molto vicino al tumulo dell'età del bronzo v'erano altri rilievi artificiali, più piccoli, in due dei quali si rinvennero sepolture d'epoca romana (v. *supra*); uno di essi è probabilmente legato ad una grande struttura abitativa coeva (una "villa rustica") posta poco più ad est. Riteniamo molto interessante il fatto che in età storica dei tumuli funerari siano stati innalzati in un'area in cui era perfettamente visibile una struttura funeraria a tumulo molto più antica.

Il tumulo protostorico del Molinat è collocato, isolato, tra i corsi del Cellina e del Meduna. Prendendo in esame le notizie relative agli altri tumuli che non erano *masièr*e e non risultavano riferibili con sicurezza all'epoca romana o all'età moderna, abbiamo potuto constatare che in seguito allo spianamento di alcune "aree con tumuli" furono recuperati frammenti ceramici protostorici pertinenti ad epoche diverse: fine Bronzo Medio-primi Bronzo Recente (XIV-XIII sec. a.C.) ad Aviano, loc. Riva de Barés,¹⁴ e a Sequals, loc. Colliselli;¹⁵ Bronzo Finale-primi secoli della seconda età del Ferro (XI-X sec. a.C.) nella loc. Riva de Barés (*fig. 3, 1-6*);¹⁶ primi secoli della seconda età del Ferro (fine VI-V sec. a.C.) ad Aviano, loc. Stabilimento ITA (*fig. 3, 7-9*).¹⁷ Elementi riferibili ad una generica età del bronzo sono, inoltre, stati raccolti in loc. Prapiere, sempre nel territorio di Aviano.¹⁸

Non ci sono elementi che permettano di considerare questi materiali – talora mescolati a laterizi d'epoca romana – pertinenti con sicurezza a contesti funerari; riteniamo, piuttosto, che i cumuli di sassi in cui, o sotto cui, si trovavano i frammenti ceramici fossero anch'essi delle *masièr*e, ottenute spietrando terreni che conservavano testimonianze della presenza di piccoli nuclei abitativi protostorici.

In base all'analisi di questi rinvenimenti, che non riferiamo, pertanto, a strutture a carattere funerario, proponiamo una piccola integrazione al quadro dell'occupazione dell'alta pianura pordenonese nelle età dei metalli.¹⁹

Non risultano, a tutt'oggi, evidenze riferibili al Bronzo Antico, periodo nel quale la frequentazione del Friuli occidentale sembra abbia interessato solamente l'arco pedemontano e l'inizio della bassa pianura.

Il tumulo ed il pozzetto di Molinat-Prati del Campanile si inseriscono in un quadro di rinvenimenti decisamente più ricco, riferibile alla fine del Bronzo Medio-primi fasi del Bronzo Recente: s'intensifica l'occupazione nella fascia pedemontana e nella bassa pianura e compaiono le prime tracce di insediamento nell'alta pianura avianese. Spicca tuttavia l'isolamento della struttura funeraria e del pozzetto – collocati in mezzo ai magredi dell'alta pianura – rispetto alle aree insediative coeve.

Anche la documentazione relativa ai siti avianesi di Riva di Barés (Bronzo Finale-primi secoli della seconda età del Ferro) e Stabilimento ITA (primi secoli della seconda età del Ferro) si inserisce in un quadro di occupazione del Friuli occidentale ormai piuttosto conosciuto, in cui emergono i grandi abitati su altura e quelli di pianura, difesi da

13. Vitri 1991.

14. D'Agnolo *et al.* 2006, p. 55, sito Barés/Cavarezza 10d (v. anche Vitri 1991, p. 179).

15. *Ricerche* 1986, p. 57-58, sito n. 7.

16. D'Agnolo *et al.* 2006, p. 56, sito Barés/Cavarezza 10e.

17. D'Agnolo *et al.* 2006, p. 36-37, sito Barés/Cavarezza 5.

18. D'Agnolo *et al.* 2006, p. 83-85, sito Barés/Cavarezza 21c.

19. Sulla Protostoria del territorio si veda il quadro fornito dal recente ed esaustivo contributo di Paola Càssola Guida (2006).



Fig. 6 –Rilievo artificiale (tumulo?)
in loc. Oliviere (Aviano).



Fig. 7 – Il rilievo artificiale (tumulo?) con la chiesetta
di San Rocco a Tauriano (Spilimbergo).

aggeri imponenti. Peraltro i materiali ceramici rinvenuti in loc. Stabilimento ITA costituiscono, finora, l'unica documentazione di frequentazione dell'alta pianura avianese nelle prime fasi della seconda età del Ferro.

Ritornando alla questione dei tumuli protostorici, le evidenze ancora esistenti che si potrebbe supporre costituiscano per forma, dimensioni e collocazione sul territorio delle strutture funerarie monumentali sono pochissime (fig. 5 e 6): auspichiamo che non solo vengano adeguatamente tutelate (anche per il loro indubbio valore storico-paesaggistico), ma che diventino oggetto di adeguate indagini scientifiche sistematiche.

I rilievi artificiali individuati nei territori di Aviano (a Marsure, nelle località Oliviere, Prapiere e Tiedda) (fig. 2, n. 11, 12-15, 16; fig. 6), di San Giorgio della Richinvelda (loc. Braida Ostia) (fig. 2, n. 137) e di Spilimbergo (San Rocco di Tauriano) (fig. 2, n. 162), come anche il tumulo dell'età del bronzo della loc. Molinat-Prati del Campanile (fig. 2, n. 86), attualmente non sono quasi più riconoscibili, coperti dalla fitta vegetazione selvatica sviluppata da quando non vengono più sfalciati (fig. 5 e 6).

Costituisce un'eccezione la struttura più imponente ancora conservata, quella su cui venne edificata la chiesetta dedicata a San Rocco a Tauriano (fig. 7), costruita nella prima metà del '500, dopo che anche lo Spilimberghese era stato pesantemente toccato da un'epidemia di peste.²⁰ La presenza sul rilievo artificiale di un edificio sacro sarebbe un'interessante indicazione di continuità nel caso in cui il tumulo fosse un'antica struttura funeraria o fosse stato percepito come tale nel XVI secolo d.C.

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Tabella 1 – Dati sui presunti tumuli del Pordenonese desunti dalle fonti storiche e dalla letteratura archeologica consultate; le coordinate indicate dal Quarina, originariamente espresse con riferimento al Datum di Roma40, sono state uniformate alle altre, espresse secondo il Datum WGS84.

N.	Comune	Toponimo/ Località	Bibliografia	Descrizione	Stato attuale	Coordinate
1	Arzene	Pras de Sora	VILLA 1999	sepulture tardo antiche in tumulo	esistente, scavato	46°01'00"N 12°50'42"E
2 9	Aviano	Stabilimento ITA	PETTARIN, RIGONI 1992, A20; D'Agnolo <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/ Cavarezza 5)	otto rilievi di forma piuttosto irregolare; recupero di materiali ceramici del VI-V sec. a.C. e romani	spianati	46°04'16.47"N 12°36'39.81"E
10	Aviano	Riva de Barés – Grion Presutta	PETTARIN, RIGONI 1992, A30; D'Agnolo <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/ Cavarezza 8)	tumulo funerario romano (III-IV sec. d.C.)	scavato, spianato	46°03'57.93"N 12°37'40.08"E
11	Aviano	Marsure – Oliviere	PETTARIN, RIGONI 1992, A44; D'Agnolo <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/Cavarezza 16)	tumulo mammellonare (Ø 25 m, h 2 m); in prossimità altri tumuli minori, alcuni già distrutti; sporadici laterizi romani	esistente	46°05'12.99"N 12°38'19.00"E
12 15	Aviano	Marsure – Prapiere	PETTARIN, RIGONI 1992, A47; D'Agnolo <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/Cavarezza 21a-d)	area con quattro tumuli mammellonari	esistenti	Da 46°05'58.37"N 12°37'50.83"E a 46°05'46.05"N 12°37'54.16"E
16	Aviano	Marsure – Tiedda	PETTARIN, RIGONI 1992, A48	tumulo mammellonare	esistente	46°06'10.74"N 12°37'9.00"E
17 26	Aviano	Ribes, a sud ovest delle colline di Giais	PETTARIN, RIGONI 1992, A50	una decina di tumuli mammellonari (Ø 3-15 m)	esistenti	46°06'27.34"N 12°37'6.10"E
27	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 10	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°02'30"N 12°35'21"E
28	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 11	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°02'19"N 12°35'15"E
29	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 12	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°02'26"N 12°34'55"E
30	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 13	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'14"N 12°35'02"E
31	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 14	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°02'35"N 12°36'48"E
32	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 15	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°02'32"N 12°36'49"E

N.	Comune	Toponimo/ Località	Bibliografia	Descrizione	Stato attuale	Coordinate
33	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 16	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'25"N 12°38'20"E
34	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 17	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°06'21"N 12°38'02"E
35	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 18	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°06'20"N 12°38'07"E
36	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 19	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°06'02"N 12°37'38"E
37	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 20	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'59"N 12°37'51"E
38	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 21	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'17"N 12°37'37"E
39	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 22	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'07"N 12°37'29"E
40	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 22°	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'07"N 12°37'33"E
41	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 7	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°03'58"N 12°36'54"E
42	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 8	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°03'0"N 12°37'30"E
43	Aviano	Tomba/Tombe	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 9	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°02'52"N 12°35'56"E
44	Aviano	Riva de Barés	PETTARIN, RIGONI 1992, A24; D'Agnolo <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/Cavarezza 10a)	tumulo mammellonare (Ø 12 m, h 1,5 m) presso il limite della riva	esistente	46°04'32.95"N 12°37'35.92"E
45	Aviano	Riva de Barés	PETTARIN, RIGONI 1992, A22; Ahumada Silva, Testa 1991, AVI V; D'Agnolo <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/Cavarezza 10b)	tumulo mammellonare (Ø 25 m, h 2 m), dalla cui demolizione è stata recuperata una fibula Aucissa	spianato	46°04'40.56"N 12°37'19.52"E
46	Aviano	La Volta – Le Palle	PETTARIN, RIGONI 1992, A21; D'Agnolo <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/Cavarezza 10c)	tumulo mammellonare (Ø 20 m, h 2 m) ed altri più piccoli in allineamento che si diparte da esso; dall'area di un tumulo spianato cocci dubitativamente attribuiti all'età del bronzo	spianati	46°04'52.72"N 12°36'51.47"E

N.	Comune	Toponimo/ Località	Bibliografia	Descrizione	Stato attuale	Coordinate
47	Aviano	Riva de Barés	PETTARIN, RIGONI 1992, A22; D'Agnolo <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/Cavarezza 10d)	rilievi irregolari (probabili spietramenti); dopo lo spianamento dall'area di uno di questi recupero di frammenti ceramici dell'età del bronzo (in Ahumada Silva, Testa 1991 attribuiti a AVIANO V)	spianati	46°04'39.67"N 12°37'32.57"E
48 51	Aviano	Roja Prapiere	D'AGNOLO <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/Cavarezza 11)	quattro rilievi di forma piuttosto allungata, dalla distruzione di alcuni dei quali sono stati recuperati materiali ceramici e in ferro di età romana, forse da tombe	in parte spianati	46°04'51.03"N 12°37'38.49"E
52	Aviano	Campagnuzza	D'AGNOLO <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/Cavarezza 13)	piccoli rilievi più o meno allungati; dalla distruzione di alcuni di essi sono stati recuperati frammenti di laterizi e ceramica di età romana	in parte esistenti	46°05'09.11"N 12°37'59.31"E
53	Brugnera	Tamai	VON ZACK 2005	tumulo sub circolare sulla sponda sinistra del Sentirone	spianato	45°55'12.31"N 12°34'57.33"E
54	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 33	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'58"N 12°32'30"E
55	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 34	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'56"N 12°33'47"E
56	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 35	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'22"N 12°32'49"E
57	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 36	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'17"N 12°32'52"E
58	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 37	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'14"N 12°05'48"E
59	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 38	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'24"N 12°33'13"E
60	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 39	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'29"N 12°33'24"E
61	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 40	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'31"N 12°33'30"E
62	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 41	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'27"N 12°33'27"E

N.	Comune	Toponimo/ Località	Bibliografia	Descrizione	Stato attuale	Coordinate
63	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 42	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'14"N 12°33'27"E
64	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 43	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'47"N 12°33'54"E
65	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 44	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'37"N 12°33'55"E
66	Budoia		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 45	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'34"N 12°33'54"E
67	Cordenons		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 70	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°00'11"N 12°43'56"E
68	Cordenons		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 71	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°00'07"N 12°44'18"E
69	Cordenons		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 72	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°00'9"N 12°46'12"E
70	Cordenons	Gumila	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 73	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	45°56'11"N 12°40'39"E
71 76	Cordovado	Castello di Cordovado	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 75-80	sei tumuli di abbellimento del parco realizzati intorno al 1820	esistenti	45°50'45"N 12°52'58"E
77	Fiume Veneto	Tomba	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 110	rilievo demolito di cui non esiste descrizione	spianato	45°55'50"N 12°43'51"E
78	Fontanafredda		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 115	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°00'43"N 12°32'38"E
79	Fontanafredda		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 116	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°00'29"N 12°32'54"E
80	Fontanafredda		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 117	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°00'23"N 12°32'43"E
81	Fontanafredda		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 118	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°00'37"N 12°33'36"E
82	Fontanafredda		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 119	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°00'31"N 12°33'44"E
83	Fontanafredda		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 120	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°00'15"N 12°33'32"E
84	Fontanafredda	tra Villadolt e Vigonovo	VON ZACK 2005	rilievo ellissoidale (17 x 8 m)	spianato	45°59'03.03"N 12°33'44.55"E
85	Fontanafredda	tra Villadolt e Vigonovo	VON ZACK 2005	rilievo circolare (Ø 7 m)	spianato	45°59'02.50"N 12°33'44.55"E
86	Maniago	Molinat	VITRI 1991; EGIDI 1994, sito n. 6	tumulo subcircolare troncoconico	esistente, parzialmente indagato	46°07'48.38"N 12°46'19.99"E

N.	Comune	Toponimo/ Località	Bibliografia	Descrizione	Stato attuale	Coordinate
87	Maniago	Molinat	EGIDI 1994, sito n. 82	cumulo di pietre; rinvenute sepolture d'età romana	spianato	46°07'54"N 12°46'02"E
88	Maniago	Molinat	EGIDI 1994, sito n. 85	tumulo mammellonare; materiali di pertinenza funeraria di IV-V sec. d.C.	indagato	46°07'48"N 12°46'20"E
89	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 132	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°08'37"N 12°45'39"E
90	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 133	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°07'47"N 12°44'15"E
91	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 134	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°07'48"N 12°44'55"E
92	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 135	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°07'39"N 12°46'00"E
93	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 136	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°07'54"N 12°46'14"E
94	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 137	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°06'33"N 12°44'34"E
95	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 138	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'42"N 12°45'00"E
96	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 139	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'21"N 12°44'40"E
97	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 152	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°06'46"N 12°40'45"E
98	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 153	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'55"N 12°38'30"E
99	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 154	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'50"N 12°39'21"E
100	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 155	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'40"N 12°39'47"E
101	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 156	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'40"N 12°39'59"E
102	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 157	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'51"N 12°39'59"E
103	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 158	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'45"N 12°40'31"E
104	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 159	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'14"N 12°40'28"E

N.	Comune	Toponimo/ Località	Bibliografia	Descrizione	Stato attuale	Coordinate
105	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 160	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'16"N 12°40'48"E
106	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 161	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'20"N 12°40'50"E
107	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 162	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'24"N 12°40'56"E
108	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 163	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°04'57"N 12°39'51"E
109	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 164	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°04'50"N 12°40'13"E
110	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 165	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°03'00"N 12°38'29"E
111	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 166	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'08"N 12°41'01"E
112	Maniago		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 167	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'09"N 12°41'27"E
113	Maniago	Campagna Ventunis	VON ZACK 2005	rilievo subcircolare	spianato	46°07'49.63"N 12°43'3.21"E
114	Maniago	Campagna Ventunis	VON ZACK 2005	rilievo subcircolare	spianato	46°08'21.54"N 12°43'18.43"E
115 116	Maniago	Case Todeschi	VON ZACK 2005	due rilievi subcircolari	spianati	46°08'43.18"N 12°43'56.20"E
117 118	Maniago	Molinat	VON ZACK 2005	due rilievi subcircolari	spianati	46°07'44.06"N 12°45'59.82"E
119	Maniago	Pra Tiepoli	VON ZACK 2005	due rilievi subcircolari	spianati	46°08'04.56"N 12°45'37.97"E
120	Maniago	Campagna Ventunis	VON ZACK 2005	rilievo subcircolare	spianato	46°07'53.50"N 12°44'27.91"E
121	Montereale Valcellina		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 148	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°07'12"N 12°40'57"E
122	Montereale Valcellina		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 149	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°06'56"N 12°38'51"E
123	Montereale Valcellina		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 150	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°06'02"N 12°38'34"E
124	Montereale Valcellina		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 151	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°06'00"N 12°39'23"E
125	Montereale Valcellina	Campagna	D'Agnolo <i>et al.</i> 2006 (Barés/ Cavarezza 23)	tumulo mammelliforme (Ø 12 m, h 1,5 m), dalla cui demolizione è stata recuperata una fibula Gurina	spianato	46°5'34.19"N 12°38'38.24"E

N.	Comune	Toponimo/ Località	Bibliografia	Descrizione	Stato attuale	Coordinate
126	Porcia	Rustighel	VON ZACK 2005	rilievo troncoconico subcircolare (Ø alla base 40 x 32 m, h 7 m) all'estremità di un rilievo allungato del terreno	esistente	45°56'12.68"N 12°38'07.37"E
127	Pordenone	Vallenoncello, Mote	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 198	rilievo demolito di cui non esiste descrizione	spianato	45°55'35"N 12°37'38"E
128	Pordenone	Vallenoncello, Mutinate	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 199	rilievo demolito di cui non esiste descrizione	spianato	45°54'23"N 12°37'18"E
129	Pordenone	Vallenoncello	VON ZACK 2005	tumulo sub circolare sulla sponda del Noncello	spianato	45°55'18.02"N 12°37'21.90"E
130	Pordenone	La Comina, Casa Comin	VON ZACK 2005	tumulo subcircolare	spianato	45°59'09.37"N 12°38'35.63"E
131	Roveredo in Piano		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 248	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°02'03"N 12°37'31"E
132	Roveredo in Piano		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 249	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°02'02"N 12°37'28"E
133	Roveredo in Piano		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 250	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'28"N 12°37'30"E
134	Roveredo in Piano		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 251	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'26"N 12°36'35"E
135	Roveredo in Piano		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 252	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°01'17"N 12°36'23"E
136	S. Giorgio della Richinvelda		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 263	rilievo del terreno demolito nella prima metà del '900 "per curiosità" senza trovarvi nulla	spianato	46°02'50"N 12°54'11"E
137	S. Giorgio della Richinvelda	Braida Ostia	VON ZACK 2005; <i>Ricerche</i> 1986, sito 1	rilievo a base subcircolare (h 3 m)	esistente	46°02'51.13"N 12°51'42.16"E
138	S. Giorgio della Richinvelda		VON ZACK 2005	rilievo subcircolare	spianato	46°02'48.65"N 12°51'53.65"E
139	S. Quirino		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 270	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°04'00"N 12°40'25"E
140	S. Quirino		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 271	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°00'14"N 12°39'28"E
141 143	S. Quirino	Sedrano, Col Magia (=masiera?)	VON ZACK 2005	3 tumuli disposti a triangolo a cavallo della vecchia strada per Sedrano	spianati	46°02'22.94"N 12°38'20.47"E

N.	Comune	Toponimo/ Località	Bibliografia	Descrizione	Stato attuale	Coordinate
144 157	S. Quirino	Col della Tesa	VON ZACK 2005; Quarina, ms. 2605, n. 169, 268-269	allineamento di 14 tumuli lungo il "brentello delle legni", attuale strada Pordenone-Maniago	spianati	da 46°00'60"N 12°38'00"E a 46°02'30"N 12°38'00"E
158	S. Quirino	La Villotta	VON ZACK 2005	tumulo subcircolare	spianato	46°03'01.31"N 12°39'9.99"E
159	S. Quirino	Sedrano, loc. Biasio	VON ZACK 2005	tumulo subcircolare	spianato	46°03'0.87"N 12°39'52.50"E
160	S. Quirino	Casa Cat[t] aruz[z]a	VON ZACK 2005	tumulo subcircolare, attorno cui gira la vecchia strada per Sedrano	spianato	46°02'37.67"N 12°38'53.90"E
161	Sequals	Casale Bit/ Colliselli	<i>Ricerche</i> 1986, sito 7	elevazione del terreno, dopo la cui distruzione si sono raccolti fr. ceramici del Bronzo recente; dalla stessa area forse proviene anche un'ascia in bronzo ad alette mediane	spianato	46°10'00" N 12°51'05" E
162	Spilimbergo	San Rocco di Tauriano	VON ZACK 2005; QUARINA 1943, p. 111; <i>Ricerche</i> 1986, sito 4	rilievo troncoconico (Ø 45 m, h 5,50 m)	esistente	46°06'30.99"N 12°52'22.00"E
163	Spilimbergo	Barbeano, Sàbidis o Clapàs	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 280	tumulo mammellonare subconico (Ø 9,50 m, h 1,80 m)	spianato	46°05'02"N 12°51'55"E
164	Spilimbergo	Barbeano, Montagnola	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 281; <i>Ricerche</i> 1986, sito 3	belvedere costruito dai proprietari con residui di demolizioni di fabbricati	spianato	46°04'54"N 12°51'55"E
165	Spilimbergo	Barbeano, Montagnola	VON ZACK 2005; <i>Ricerche</i> 1986, sito 3 (è citato lo spianamento di altri due tumuli)	tumulo subcircolare 75 m ca. a est del tumulo "La Montagnola"	spianato	46°04'53.42"N 12°51'58.24"E
166	Spilimbergo	Vacile	<i>Ricerche</i> 1986, sito 5	rilievo troncoconico	spianato	46°08'26"N 12°53'32" E
167	Valvasone	La Collina	QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 304	rilievo (h 15 m ca.) fatto costruire dal proprietario per dar lavoro ai contadini affamati nel 1817	spianato	46°01'20"N 12°51'20"E
168	Vivaro		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 307	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'16"N 12°46'07"E
169	Vivaro		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 308	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°05'27"N 12°47'00"E
170	Vivaro		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 309	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°03'26"N 12°45'36"E

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171	Vivaro		QUARINA, ms. 2605, n. 310	piccoli rialzi formati da sassi asportati dai campi	spianati	46°03'19"N 12°45'46"E
172	Vivaro	Basaldella	VON ZACK 2005	rilievo subcircolare	spianato	46°05'49.60"N 12°47'27.23"E

THE EARLY BRONZE AGE IN NORTH EASTERN ITALY THE MAKING OF A MONUMENTAL LANDSCAPE

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ABSTRACT

The most recent field researches in Friuli have demonstrated that at the beginning of the Early Bronze Age the landscape of the Upper Plain was largely shaped by kin groups settled in short-lasting hamlets. In order to assert their possession of the surrounding land, and to celebrate their ancestors, these small communities built a large number of round barrows of pebbles and earth, some of which have survived until the present day.

About 1900 B.C. this landscape, dotted with tumuli, began to be developed with more substantial, longer-lasting settlements provided with defences of clayey earth. In the most ancient of these villages discovered so far, some burials were found inside the core of the rampart. This feature, as well as other – structural or ritual – details, indicates both the transition to a new way of living and the strong connection with the tradition of burial tumuli.

Even today not much is known about the far eastern corner of Northern Italy (at one end of the Alpine region and at the junction of two different worlds) during the long period from the Final Neolithic to the end of the Copper Age or opening of the Early Bronze Age.¹

By contrast, for the same period, in the Alpine and Prealpine territories, from Piedmont and Val d'Aosta to the Veneto, a considerable number of discoveries, both recent and less recent, help to provide an increasingly rich and complex framework. I refer in particular to the many “open shrines”, where cultic practices and social rites were performed, identified by megalithic remains such as post or stone alignments, ritual ploughing, flat pebble cairns, figured monoliths and *statues-menhirs*, and by various kinds of small finds, often ritually fragmented:² on the whole, quite a good number of ritual sites with manifold, especially

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1. Montagnari, Kokelj 1994; Pessina 2003. For an outline of this period in Friuli cf. Càssola Guida, in Corazza *et al.* 2006, p. 18-19.
2. The recent, most important, acquisitions, to be added to the well-known, spectacular, sites of St.-Martin-de-Corléans, in Val d'Aosta (Mezzena 1997), and Sion in Suisse (Gallay 1995), are those of Lombardia, where an extraordinary concentration of finds was observed, in particular in Val Camonica and neighbouring valleys (Poggiani Keller 2004; Poggiani Keller 2006; Fedele 2007), and Alto Adige (Dal Ri *et al.* 2004). Recently, also in Piedmont some megalithic evidence has been discovered (Gambari, Venturino Gambari 2003). As for Veneto, apart from the site of Sovizzo (Vicenza), which might be earlier than the Bell Beaker age which the authors refer to (Bianchin Citton, Balista 2004; Bianchin Citton 2007, and Bianchin Citton, Balista in this volume), in the territory of Verona there is now the fresh evidence of a triangular platform where both religious and funerary rites were performed (*Storie sepolte* 2008, p. 19). For the definition of such “sacred” sites and a description of their many functions (ideological, social, cosmological, funerary, etc.) cf. Fedele 2007, p. 52-53 (with refs).

agrarian, connotations, where in the period of the Bell Beaker diffusion, burial features became predominant. All these sites, as has been observed for the British Isles, “must have served a role in turning landscape into homescape by a process of interaction with the surrounding natural world”.³

So far, nothing similar has ever been found in the region from Friuli to the Gorizian and Triestine Karst where, still, some caves and rare hilltops, which in the EBA were to become seats of fortresses, have yielded Neolithic and notably Bell Beaker sherds – on the whole, isolated finds pointing to a sparse occupation.⁴ Such a knowledge gap, which is now on the way to being partly filled,⁵ is plausibly due to scant research in the Alpine zone, to damage caused by agriculture in the plain, and maybe, in some degree, to the paucity of the ancient human groups, consisting of some few scores of individuals bound by kinship, settled in small short-lasting villages which are often difficult to locate.⁶

The situation is somewhat better for the EBA, thanks to the significant progress made in research in Friuli, especially in the tumuli of the Udine territory. In particular, the emergency excavations conducted in the 1980's by the Soprintendenza Archeologica and, since 2000, systematic field-work by the University of Udine have provided important information not only about their earth-and-pebble building technique and stone-core structures (such as a cairn or a pebble platform covering a coffin or a small funerary chamber), but also about the quantity of the surviving tumuli, their distribution, cultural framework and chronology.⁷ Both excavations and surveys afford a glimpse of the features of a landscape dotted with artificial mounds, sometimes in clusters, that seems to have been peculiar to the Upper Plain extending from the first hill-slopes to the spring-line:⁸ that is, in a territory which, westward, on the right side of the Tagliamento river, is dry and scarcely suitable for agriculture, while eastward, on the left side, and generally in central Friuli, is more productive, with extended pastures but also plots of fertile land.

As for the absolute chronology, a fixed point has been supplied by the exploration (2000-2002) of the tumulus of Sant'Osvaldo, south of Udine (*fig. 1a*), for which some ¹⁴C analyses of bone samples point to the span 1970-1880 B.C. calibrated 1σ.⁹ This result is very important but obviously does not resolve the chronological problem of the formation of a landscape remarkably rich in tumuli, of which what we see today is but the tip of the iceberg.

As E. Borgna has highlighted¹⁰ – on the basis of the researches at the tumulus of Mereto di Tomba, where a small quantity of evidence lets us infer a use of the structure prior to its completion – the occurrence of burial mounds in north eastern Italy cannot be regarded as a unitary phenomenon: tumuli must have been erected by degrees and in some cases may have incorporated elements of the Late Copper Age.

A small number of archaic features in formerly investigated structures seems to confirm the idea of a gradual development. The burial deposition under a mound near Remanzacco, east of Udine – hitherto the only one provided with grave goods – may be considered earlier than it had been thought: both items of the funerary equipment, a stone pendant and a triangular metal dagger of the “Tipo Iesi” (*fig. 1b*), point to the beginning of

3. Harding 2000, p. 313; see also Bradley 1998.

4. Carso: Montagnari Kokelj 1996 (with refs); Gilli, Montagnari Kokelj 1996; Montagnari Kokelj, Crismani 1997; Barfield 1999. Eastern Friuli: Pessina 2003, p. 213-215 (with refs). Besides the caves, hitherto only at Castellazzo di Doberdò (Montagnari Kokelj 1989, p. 22-23, 28, pl. 4, 1) and S. Michele di Bagnoli (Maselli Scotti 1986, col. 343, pl. 2, 1) sherds of Bell Beaker pottery were retrieved. A distribution map of the finds, which are not few but to a great extent out of context, is in Corazza *et al.* 2006, p. 146-147.

5. A re-examination of such problems is currently being undertaken by G. Simeoni for his PhD thesis; cf. moreover, Visentini 2006 and the papers of E. Borgna and S. Vitri *et al.* at the present conference.

6. A few settlements have been pinpointed at the edge between the plain and the hills, provided in some cases with partial defences (*éperons barrés*), such as Sach di Sotto (Visentini *et al.* 2001; Visentini 2006) and Ponte S. Quirino: here, in particular, considerable traces of occupation dating between LCA and EBA were located (Pessina 2003, p. 213, with refs).

7. Vitri 1982; Vitri 1987; Borgna, Corazza 2006; Borgna, Corazza 2007; Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 192-194.

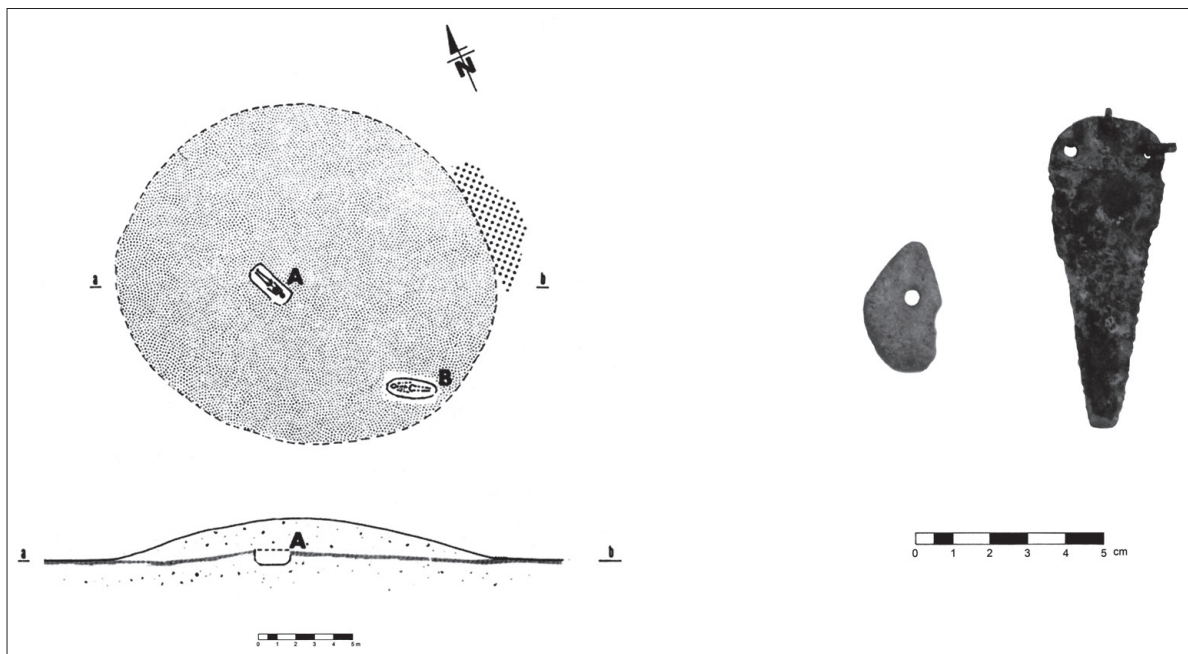
8. Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, pl. 44.

9. Canci *et al.* 2005, p. 141 (with refs); Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 193-194. A little later is the ¹⁴C date recently obtained for the interment in the tumulus of Mereto di Tomba (see Borgna, this volume).

10. Cf. Borgna in this volume and Borgna, Corazza 2007.



a



b

Fig. 1 – a: Tumulus of Sant'Oswaldo (Udine) during the excavation: the pebble core is easily visible; b: The tomb of Selvis di Remanzacco (Udine) and its equipment (the primary interment was almost in the middle of the tumulus).

the EBA period, maybe towards the end of the 3rd millennium B.C.¹¹ In another tumulus near the modern village of S. Odorico near Flaibano, close to the eastern bank of the Tagliamento, a stratigraphic section suggests the presence of a platform similar to that of Mereto (the whole structure was unfortunately razed to the ground and very little could be rescued). Here, an early occupation may be inferred from the discovery of an underlying pit filled with Copper Age sherds and young ovocaprid bones: the raising of the mound on the pit might indicate the desire to link the monument to a pre-existent domestic space.¹²

In short, a small quantity of both new and old evidence permits us to affirm that in the course of the EBA the Upper Plain changed its aspect little by little, starting possibly as early as the transition from the Copper to the Early Bronze Age. This points to a slow, gradual transition from a “homescape”, where human presence was not strongly marked, to a landscape more and more spectacular in a funerary sense. Such a transformation seems to pertain to a larger phenomenon affecting the Northern Adriatic from mid-Friuli to Triestine Karst, where a few still unexplored mounds survive, and as far as Istria and the Dalmatian coasts:¹³ it would have kept pace with social and ideological changes. In a phase of intensified farming,¹⁴ less social fluidity and a more pronounced ideological role of the ancestors of single groups would have caused the raising of innumerable individual barrows in honour of dead chiefs, with the well-known attempts at visibility from afar, assertion of the possession of stretches of land and routes, definition of boundaries and, mainly, demonstration of both identity and power by the group responsible for the building.¹⁵

This “tumuli landscape” must thus have been still “in fieri” around 1900-1800 B.C., that is at the beginning of the stage that in a few centuries led to the spreading of long-lasting settlements. Starting from this epoch, by degrees, small human groups would have joined together to form communities of some hundreds, whose social and economic organization was territorial and tribe-based. Friuli seems to have fully reached such a social system around the mid 2nd millennium, when substantial villages provided with increasingly elaborate defences of clay-rich earth and wooden posts largely spread throughout the region.

Thanks to the recent excavations, we can now try to follow the stages of this process too. For the most ancient period our only source of information is, so far, the “castelliere” of Sedegliano, in the low-land west of Udine, not far from the Tagliamento, in an area that was becoming particularly thick with tumuli.

This site of almost 3 hectares, founded by a much larger community than those of the mound-builders, was provided with earth-work defences and ditches, in a quadrangular lay-out whose repeated reinforcements make it the most spectacular of the three surviving “castellieri of the plain” (with Galleriano and Savalons) (*fig. 2a*). Here a cluster of five inhumation tombs was found, inserted well into the earlier defensive system (a low rampart of clayey earth) (*fig. 2b*).¹⁶ Prior to these excavations we had not known of any burial connected with a Bronze Age site in Friuli: this discovery, therefore, provided totally new results, both for the prominent position of the interments in the core of the rampart and for the burials themselves, their rituals and meaning.

11. S. Vitri, in *Caput Adriae* 1983, p. 84-86, fig. 10-13; Vitri 1982, p. 39, nos. 2 and 4; Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 193, pl. 45b. For another LC-EBA specimen of stone pendant from Friuli cf. Bressan 1982, p. 115, fig. 6, 16; for stone pendants in general, Miari 1995, p. 519. As for the dagger, Bianco Peroni 1994, p. 29-30.

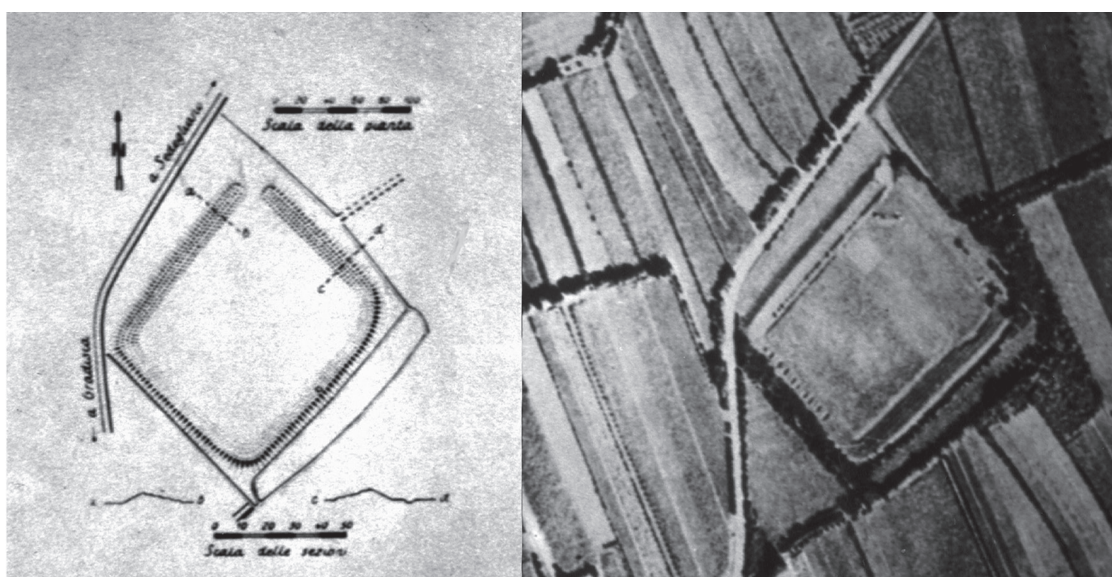
12. S. Vitri, in *Caput Adriae* 1983, p. 84-85, fig. 9; Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 193. The pottery found at Flaibano had been ascribed to the Middle or Late Bronze Age but the revision currently in course by G. Simeoni points to a much higher date, in an early phase of the Copper Age. In the same area, at a range of *ca.* 100m from the tumulus, remains of huts of the Late Copper Age have been recently discovered (Vitri *et al.*, in this volume).

13. On the Adriatic connections Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007. For the far-reaching contacts involving the so-called *Caput Adriae* during the 3rd millennium B.C., in relation with the expansion of the so-called Cetina culture, cf. Maran 2007; Borgna, Càssola Guida 2009 (in particular n. 2, with refs).

14. For evidence of “rural” patterns in Friulian mounds, such as *e.g.* use of “clearance” material for raising the monuments, cf. Borgna, Càssola Guida 2009.

15. Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 193-194; Càssola Guida, Corazza 2009.

16. Càssola Guida, Corazza 2004, col. 526-530; Càssola Guida, Corazza 2005, col. 346-353; Càssola Guida, Corazza 2006, col. 298-303; Borgna, Càssola Guida 2009.



a



b

Fig. 2 – a: Sedegliano (Udine): plan and aerial view of the castelliere; b: Sedegliano (Udine): tombs cut into the earlier clay-rich earth-work. In the middle, tomb 3, with two superimposed bodies deprived of their skull.

The bodies had no grave goods, which seems to have been normal in tumuli, and were laid close to an entrance of the enclosed area.¹⁷ They evidently belonged to a select group of people, recognized as founders and, after their death, protectors of both the settlement and its access. These peculiarities permit us to compare these burials with those of the tumuli, and to ascribe to them similar requisites and symbolic value. Moreover the transition from the single burials in tumuli to the plurality of interments in the rampart of Sedegliano makes us aware of how the situation was changing in accordance with the increasing complexity of the social structure.

Recent ¹⁴C analyses on bone samples from Sedegliano point to a high chronology and to a partial overlapping with the barrow building: the tests indicate a span from C19th cal. B.C. for the earlier burials – and consequently for the setting up of the earlier defences – and C17th-16th for the more recent interments.¹⁸

Both the building technique and the position in a zone especially marked by the presence of burial mounds appear significant: the simple earth rampart provides both the link between tumuli and defence settlements and the first hint of a further transformation of the landscape. From a scarcely inhabited territory, formed by pastures and small cultivated fields,¹⁹ dotted with mounds and provided with low-impact, short-lasting villages, in a few centuries there was a thorough shift to a landscape where emphasis was given to low-land and hill-top sites – maybe differentiated in functions –, which with their elaborate and imposing fortifications overlooked large extensions of cultivated land as well as trade routes: in brief, attention moved from dead to living houses.

To the features shared by tumuli and such an early fortress as Sedegliano we may add some other elements, even more pregnant with symbolism, which once again permit us to establish links with the tradition of kinship-based relations. I refer to two different rites, both documented at Sedegliano, namely the removal of skulls from corpses in order to bury them separately, and the scattering of human bone fragments in significant places. The first rite is evidenced by the absence of skulls in the double interment of Tomb 3/2004 (*fig. 2b*); the second by the spreading of bits of human bones in the upper layer of the earlier rampart.²⁰

Both rites were well-known in prehistoric Europe,²¹ and largely practised in Northern Italy, in particular in the Alpine region, at least from the Copper Age.²² Together with the use of excarnation and secondary burial, they bear witness to the will of living people to connect themselves with their ancestors or, in the case of outside groups, to establish descent from the previous inhabitants of the country.²³ (It may be worth while underlining that the same symbolic tie between past and present, dead and living, was established by means of breaking up *statues-menhirs* and monoliths and reusing the fragments or disseminating them in either burial or cultic contexts).²⁴

17. For the emphasis given to points of entrance and exit by marking them out with human remains cf. Brück 1995, p. 256, 257 and fig. 12-13.

18. Càssola Guida, Corazza 2005, col. 356, 358-359; Càssola Guida, Corazza 2009.

19. Palynological analyses carried out at S. Osvaldo allowed the reconstruction of the framework of an open land, with meadows and some cultivated plots, and with woods (especially oaks and river-side trees) at some distance (Canci *et al.* 2005, p. 141, with refs). The final publication of the excavations is currently in course.

20. Càssola Guida, Corazza 2005, col. 350, 352-353. The study of all the human remains was undertaken by A. Canci, who is to publish the anthropological data of both S. Osvaldo and Sedegliano. From a preliminary analysis, the fragments (from long bones, ribs, vertebrae, hand- and foot-bones, very rarely from skull) seem to pertain to two individuals, a girl, 15-18 years old, and a male adult.

21. Brück 1995; Hingley 1996, p. 233; Chapman 2000, p. 132 *sq.*; Harding 2000, p. 334-335; Brück 2006, p. 80-84.

22. For examples of manipulation of selected human bones cf. Mezzena 1997, p. 93; Fedele 2007, p. 57-58, 61-62 (this author speaks of an “ideology of human relics”). For evidence of the cult of skulls, Barfield 1984, p. 168; Gallay 1995, p. 170; de Marinis 2003, p. 28-41.

23. Barfield 1995, p. 14; Chapman 2000, p. 146; Fedele 2007, p. 62-64.

24. Cf. Fedele 2007, who, as regards the distribution of relics of monoliths or *statues-menhirs*, proposes an “ideological equivalence” between humans and monoliths (p. 61).

Thus an early fortress such as Sedegliano might have been not only a focal point in the landscape, a point where life and death converged, but also a “ritualized” meeting site for neighbouring communities, who gathered there for funerals of eminent people, seasonal festivals and other ceremonies.²⁵

Other fortified sites, earth- or stone-walled, were erected, roughly in the same period (that is in a mid or advanced phase of the EBA), either inland or on the coast, from the Friuli plain to the Triestine Karst and Istria — among them Monkodonja, with its extraordinary visibility from the sea, must have played a particularly important role²⁶ —, but also some well-located villages such as Elleri near Trieste, Slivia and Castellazzo di Doberdò on the Karst and Ponte San Quirino in Eastern Friuli.

In such a “tumuli and castellieri landscape”, burials inside settlements, skull cult and manipulation of human bones seem to be peculiar to the stage of formation: a critical stage, closely connected with Copper Age ideologies (expressions of a deeply-rooted ancestor cult)²⁷ and at the same time announcing new developments. When the tribe-based system comes to its maturity such rites seem no longer to be documented in Friuli: as far as we know, they disappear around the closing of the EBA, together with the use of individual tumuli and even, it would appear, every kind of formal burial, maybe as a rejection, in a much more complex society, of the old practices aiming at the assertion of descent.

Tombs were to reappear in the form of urns with cremated remains only some centuries later, in the “new era” opened by the Bronzo Finale.

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25. We may quote as a comparison the case of the Istrian hill-fort of Monkodonja near Rovinj equally situated in a tumuli zone and provided with dead near a monumental entrance: Mihovilić *et al.* 2005, p. 399 (with refs); see Mihovilić *et al.* in this volume.

26. Borgna, Càssola Guida 2009.

27. Barfield 1984.

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INDIVIDUAL BURIAL AND COMMUNAL RITES THE MANIFOLD USES OF MONUMENTAL ARCHITECTURE IN THE NORTH ADRIATIC BRONZE AGE

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ABSTRACT

The recent excavation of the tumulus of Mereto di Tomba, near Udine in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, offers fresh data to the research of the prehistoric monumental landscape. Some proposed connections between the tumuli of north eastern Italy and those diffused in a wider area including the Balkan-Adriatic regions, on the one hand, and the Aegean, on the other hand, seem to be strengthened. Furthermore, according to recent trends in the field of research on mounds and barrows, the recent evidence sheds new light on the emergence of tumuli in the northern Adriatic area by suggesting that these monuments do not constitute a homogeneous and monolithic phenomenon; both chronologically and functionally they are part of a palimpsestic landscape, provided with monumental signs dating to different period and focusing on different ritual occasions, which involved individual funerals as well as communal ritual ceremonies.

1. In a preliminary presentation of the phenomenon of burial tumuli in north eastern Italy we proposed, at the conference “Between the Aegean and the Baltic Seas” in Zagreb,¹ to view the tumuli of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, which appeared to be a uniform expression of Early Bronze Age funerary habits, as somehow connected (as regards social behaviour and the use of symbols in the framework of long-distance relationships) with the Aegean tumuli and, in particular, with those constituted by a stone core or a cairn, whose diffusion seems to have taken place mostly towards the transition from the Early to the Middle Aegean Bronze Age.²

We are now able to improve our knowledge with fresh data coming from our exploration, carried out in three successive annual seasons, at the tumulus of Tomba at Mereto, NW of Udine (*fig. 1*).³

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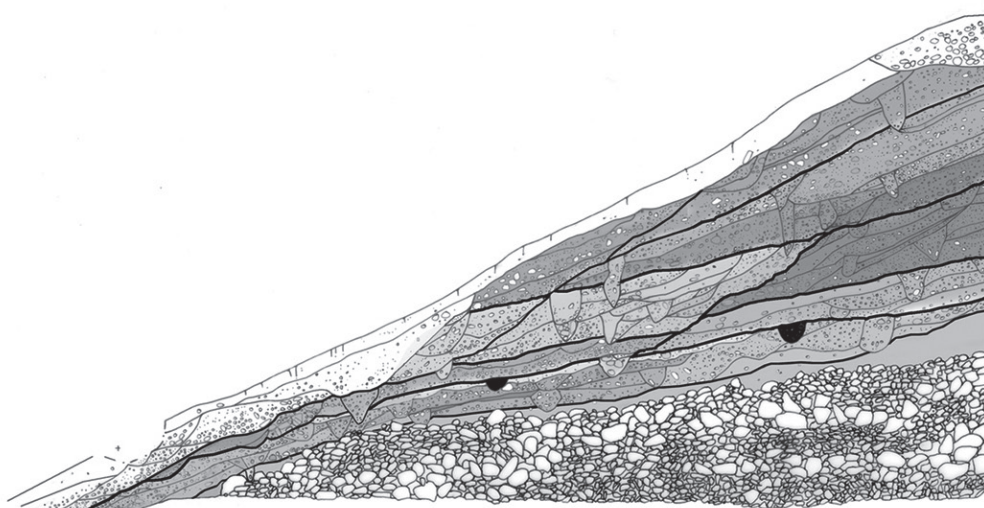
1. Galanaki *et al.* 2007.
2. Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007 with references; cf. Müller Celka 2007; for an updated perspective on the Aegean and its neighbouring areas see Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005 and several papers in this volume.
3. Borgna, Corazza 2006; Borgna, Corazza 2007; owing to several constraints, in particular those placed by the requirements of cultural heritage preservation, the excavations at Mereto could not be carried out according to the methods set by the most updated debate on tumuli, which aims at a complete sampling of each investigated context (see Bradley 2007, p. 179). The data presented come from a partial excavation of the tumulus, which involved preventive geophysical prospecting, extensive digging of *ca.* 220 sq. m and analysis and survey of both NS and EW orthogonal sections of the mound.



1



2



3

Fig. 1 – Mereto di Tomba, Udine: 1. the tumulus during 2007 excavations; 2. the grave; 3. the 2006 NS section with indication of building complexes, possible levels of occupation and post-holes (archive of the Laboratorio di Protostoria, Università di Udine).

Starting with a few general inferences, the emergence of the “tumuli” phenomenon in north eastern Italy would seem now to be definitely well-rooted, culturally and chronologically, in the Early Bronze Age – something we had already suggested, particularly on the basis of the data from the tumulus of S. Osvaldo, at Udine, which belongs to the mid-phase of the period.⁴ We may now add that the location of such monuments seems to emphasize a still earlier ritual use of the landscape. The data of Mereto in particular – by pointing to a possible earlier occupation somewhere in the period extending from the late Copper Age well into the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, namely the period that coincides with the late diffusion of the “Bell Beaker package” – seem now to extend the span of time required for an early ritual landscape to appear in the upper Friuli plain.⁵

Turning now for a moment to the problem of Adriatic-Aegean connections, which we have faced in our previous contribution, it is worth noticing that some recent researches – in particular the results of Joerg Rambach’s fieldwork at Olympia, where the diffusion of the well-known Cetina pottery is supposed to have involved exclusively the latest horizon of EH III or even the early phase of MH – suggest that the strongest Adriatic connections with Greece would be discernible only towards the end of the 3rd and the transition to the 2nd millennium B.C., just when burial tumuli began spreading also in mainland Greece.⁶ In other words, the life-span of the North Adriatic tumuli, with roots in the second half of the 3rd millennium and going well into the European EBA, fits well with the chronological framework of the Aegean-Adriatic interaction as well as with the life-cycle of several Aegean tumuli; we feel more confident, then, in studying the local phenomenon as a part of a macrophenomenon not only on a European but also on a Mediterranean scale.

2. The tumulus of Mereto was located on the border of an alluvial terrace, on a slight rise overlooking the upper Friuli plain, within an extended strip of country where the majority of known tumuli are situated. The EW linear distribution of these monuments along the hills and across the main river valleys has been explained in terms of their functions as monumental markers in the context of trade routes and long-distance exchange.⁷ Within this landscape, however, visibility at a distance does not seem to have been a generally shared requirement, as it is not one that all tumuli meet. As for the Mereto area, judging from the evidence of old maps, our monument seems to have been inserted into a slightly denser distribution of tumuli than is perceivable in the present-day landscape: we could envisage a pattern of isolated monuments, not particularly prominent within the landscape yet linked to one another by means of “intervisibility”.

We could possibly attribute the location of our tumulus to both the presence of arable land – much in demand during a time of increasing land exploitation in the framework of an agropastoral subsistence⁸ – and the availability of building materials, in particular the huge stones excavated from the subsoil, and possibly of other resources, such as flint and wood, the latter exploited in large quantities for tumuli construction.⁹

The mound, *ca.* 6.50m high and provided with a diameter of *ca.* 25m, was characterized by a stepped profile and was founded on a huge flat platform, consisting of large stones placed in an ordered framework (*fig. 1, 1*). The platform stood on an older soil, which seems to have been partially removed and levelled before a layer of earth was placed on top for preparing the area; this layer covered an oblong pit cut in the barren subsoil, which, during our 2008 season, was found to be the central burial (*fig. 1, 2*).

4. Canci *et al.* 2005; Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 193-194, with further literature.

5. We have now at our disposal a complete series of radiocarbon dates (by Beta Analytic, Miami, USA), which we are going to publish after completing the elaboration and interpretation of the stratigraphy. These dates point to the late Early Bronze Age for the burial disposal within an area, however, previously used for possible ritual and funerary purposes.

6. Rambach 2007 with literature; on the more general phenomenon of the Adriatic-Aegean connections see most recently Maran 2007; Forenbaher 2009, with discussion and references.

7. Borgna, Càssola Guida 2009.

8. Cf. Mlekuž 2007 for the phenomena of progressive stabilization and territoriality connected, towards the late Eneolithic-beginning of the Early Bronze Age, with some shifting in the subsistence economy.

9. On the presence of Eneolithic occupation in the area, signalled by the distribution of lithic materials, see Bressan *et al.* 1981.

Some residual structures such as small-pebble paving and a couple of post-holes seem to attest to an early occupation, which probably involved roughly the same circular area as the later tumulus and might have implied the building of some kind of wooden enclosure. To this early occupation we are inclined to attribute, in particular, two flint barbed-and-tanged arrowheads – one with short wings, the other, longer, with pronounced wings (fig. 2, 1-2). Both objects, which seem to belong to an Eneolithic tradition,¹⁰ are deemed to have been used as ritual implements, the more so given their possible association with some tiny human bones – such as phalanges and teeth – belonging to at least two or three individuals,¹¹ evidence which might suggest a possible ritual function of the area linked to the sphere of ancestry. Such evidence was earlier than our monument, though the foundation of both the tomb and the platform directly above it was surely not coincidental, as the apparently intentional redepositing of one of the arrowheads above the grave might indicate.¹²

The evidence of multiple stages of activity pointing to an articulated sequence of both chronological and functional phases prompts us to consider the tumulus of Mereto as a complex monument apart from and beyond the grave, as some trends of the recent research on tumuli would suggest.¹³

Though the emphasis on a tomb symbolically coinciding with the place of a common ancestor was most probably central to the ideological discourse of the builders, the Mereto tumulus seems to us first and foremost to have served less as a tomb and more as a ritual communal monument well-suited to ritual performances implying relatively unrestricted access. The stone platform may be considered as an “open arena” for ceremonial display, according to a terminology adopted in some European and American contexts, which seem to be at least partially comparable with our context.¹⁴

As the radiocarbon data now seem to confirm (*supra*, n. 5), the huge stone platform was completed after many generations, during the course of which the stone core was enlarged by progressively adding further clusters of stones to the perimeter, thereby transforming the original simple cairn or funerary marker into a much more imposing ritual stage. Testifying to the performance of ritual acts are a few, yet highly significant, remains which seem to have been deliberately deposited on the platform. Such remains were included partly in a multiple sequence of layers of clay and partly in brown silt levels, the latter in particular filling a kind of depression or hollow on the north-western sector of the monument. The layers – which formed a multiple series of entities corresponding to as many discard activities – together constitute a kind of thick seal to the stone platform (fig. 1, 3). Each of these levels represents a distinct refuse context; each includes exclusive associations of materials, varying from concentrations of ash mixed with fragments of scorched silt surfaces, to fragmented ceramics mixed with animal bones, to charcoal levels with ash. Selective discards on top of the platform may well have been the remains of discrete ritual performances, repeated in time possibly according to a cyclical sequence adopted during the lengthy process of constructing the stone platform.

Apart from these more visible contexts of ritual remains, scattered pottery sherds have been found, together with some flint cores and the odd animal bone, in the silt and clay levels which alternated with thick gravel deposits in order to elevate the mound. Both the extreme fragmentation and the worn state of preservation of such materials, as well as their close association with layers originating from possible nearby soils, would suggest that they are the result of secondary deposition, thereby implying random post-depositional dislocation after

10. The example provided with short wings could date to the initial Early Bronze Age: cf. Poggiani Keller 1999-2000, p. 346, fig. 38, 1; Baioni, Poggiani Keller 2008, p. 163, fig. 9 (Lovere, Bergamo); Aspes *et al.* 1988, p. 407, fig. 1 (tumulus of Canzo, Como); Dal Ri *et al.* 2004, pl. 11, 1 (Velturno, Trento); Poggiani Keller 2006, p. 255, fig. 9; Barich 1971, p. 105, fig. 12, no. 3; cf. de Marinis 2003, p. 50 (“cuspidi di freccia con peduncolo breve ed alette” in the second phase of the Italian Early Bronze Age); see also *Preistoria del Lago di Garda* 1980, fig. 7, 8; *Prima della storia* 1987, p. 87, fig. 1, 17 (Ca’ Nova di Cavaion); Salzani 1998, p. 78, fig. 2, 7; the other artefact seems more directly related to the late Eneolithic/Bell Beaker tradition; see Baioni, Poggiani Keller 2008, p. 166, fig. 12 (Trescore Balneario); cf. in general *Preistoria del Lago di Garda* 1980, fig. 20, 5 (Lavagnone); Dal Ri *et al.* 2004, pl. 8, 2; fig. 22a (Velturno, La Vela, Trentino); Isotta, Longo 2004, fig. 3, nos. 30-31; Grandinetti, Ronchitelli 1996, p. 549, F7 (Barche di Solferino); in Europe cf. Heyd 2001, fig. 392A 1; Case 2001, fig. 6, 12-14.

11. I am grateful for this identification to Alessandro Canci, the anthropologist who takes part in the Mereto project.

12. Cf. Healy, Harding 2007; Last 2007b; for secondary deposition of earlier objects see *e.g.* Turek 2006, p. 172.

13. See in particular Last 2007a; cf. *Paysages funéraires* 2008 (in particular Clark).

14. Garwood 2007; Milner 2004, p. 71-73; cf. Clark forthcoming.

primary breakage and discard. We cannot exclude, however, the possibility that the inclusion of “cultural” materials such as vessel fragments may also in this case have been the result of intentional disposal relevant to ritual requirements, since these fragments – associated also with the stones of the platform – were for the most part evenly distributed without discrete concentrations, while evidence of the most common settlement remains is missing.¹⁵

Several scholars have pointed out that the use of all kinds of known materials for mound building, both natural and artificial – namely stones, gravel, earth, flint, bones, ceramics and so on – is possibly the consequence of ritual behaviour determined ultimately by the cosmological conceptions of the ancient community.¹⁶ We would then suppose that these materials were gathered from middens well-suited for manuring and refuse heaps, both of which, by virtue of their containing and controlling the past, while simultaneously promising fertility, were often imbued with a ritual power.¹⁷

The repeated evidence of meaningful items selectively included in the building material of the tumulus permits us to envisage a sequence of activities governed by such requirements as “repetition”, “invariance” and “traditionalism”, which are typical of ritual behaviour.¹⁸

Invariance and repetition of ritual performances also seem to have played a role in the deposition of two bovine heads; both are the remains of successive, albeit homologous, offering activities, either marking the foundation of single sectors of the platform or emphasizing the closing of communal ceremonial practices. Among the rituals performed at the platform, communal feasts, implying the distribution of meat, seem therefore to have played an important part, possibly in the context of ceremonial exchange between eminent individuals and groups.¹⁹

As for the chronology of such ceremonies, radiocarbon data now seem to ascribe them to the period between the late Early Bronze Age and the advanced Middle Bronze Age. As for ceramic evidence, we may add that a few small, not well-characterized sherds coming specially from the layers under the platform might attest to an earlier phase, somewhere between the late Eneolithic and the early EBA (*fig. 2, 3-13*).²⁰ Other fragments, such as a so-called “ansa a gomito” (*fig. 2, 20*), might point more precisely to a date well into the EBA, while a few elements in particular, such as a small vessel with inwards inclined walls and a small handle immediately under the rim, or a globular jar with a drastically everted or “ledged” rim (*fig. 2, 15-16*), could, by finding comparisons in both the western “Poladian” contexts and the eastern “pre-castellieri” *facies*, provide a date towards the end of the EBA or even in the MBA, as a couple of fragments provided with up-turned tongued grips with a circular impression on the top might particularly suggest (*fig. 2, 23*).²¹

15. On fragmentation in prehistory see Chapman 2000; Chapman, Gaydarska 2007.

16. Cf. Lewis 2007; Brittain 2007, p. 149; Brück 1995; Brück 2006.

17. Cf. Brück 1995, p. 255-256; Lewis 2007, p. 78-79.

18. Bell 1997; Kyriakidis 2005.

19. Cf. Milner 2004, p. 91; for the use of cattle in the ritual activity and ceremonial exchange of societies founded on mixed subsistence resources cf. *e.g.* Zeimbekis 2006.

20. Among early elements we may include some straight thickened rims, sometimes provided with impressed plastic ribs (*fig. 2, 9*); small ledge-rims belonging to globular or conical bowls (*fig. 2, 7-8*); walls with irregular slight grooves (“Besenstrich”) (*fig. 2, 3 and 13*); sherds belonging to small mugs with globular profile: these elements find comparisons mainly in late Eneolithic/Early Bronze Age contexts, such as in north Italian megalithic contexts (Dal Ri *et al.* 2004, pl. I-III, Velturmo, Trento; cf. Aspes *et al.* 1988, p. 407) as well as in some Italian and European pottery contexts characterized by the accompanying Bell Beaker set of pottery: see *e.g.* Sarti 2001, p. 642 bottom right: Sesto Fiorentino; cf. Cocchi Genick 1996, p. 493, *fig. 174*; *ibid.*, p. 208, *fig. 54*; Fiavé; p. 292, *fig. 94, 3*: Ca’ di Marco; Landolfi *et al.* 2005, p. 1008-1009, *fig. 1, 2*: Abruzzo; cf. also Leonini 2004, *passim*; for European contexts, see *e.g.* in Austria: Neugebauer, Neugebauer-Maresch 2001, p. 431, *fig. 2, 9 and 11*; for a well-stratified context provided with a radiocarbon calibrated date pointing to the beginning of the EBA see also Poggiani Keller 1999-2000, p. 345-348.

21. See for example Aspes 1984, p. 484, no. 3 (“olla a botticella”, Rivoli); for the handle: Bernabò Brea *et al.* 1997, *fig. 154, 9* (Rubiera); Bermond Montanari 2004, *fig. 2, 16* (near Ravenna); Marzatico, Tecchiati 2002, *fig. 1, 15-16* (Fiavé); for the small globular vessel see a sherd from Monkodonja, attributed to the “Cetina” for the incised decoration: Mihovilić *et al.* 2005, p. 403 *fig. 13*; cf. *Caput Adriae* 1983, pl. 25, 11 (castelliere di Pollanza). For the grips see the most ancient pottery from Elleri, Muggia, Trieste: Maselli Scotti 1997, p. 173, pl. 17, 12; in general the pottery of Mereto is well comparable with the materials from Monkodonja: Buršić-Matjašić 1998, *passim*.

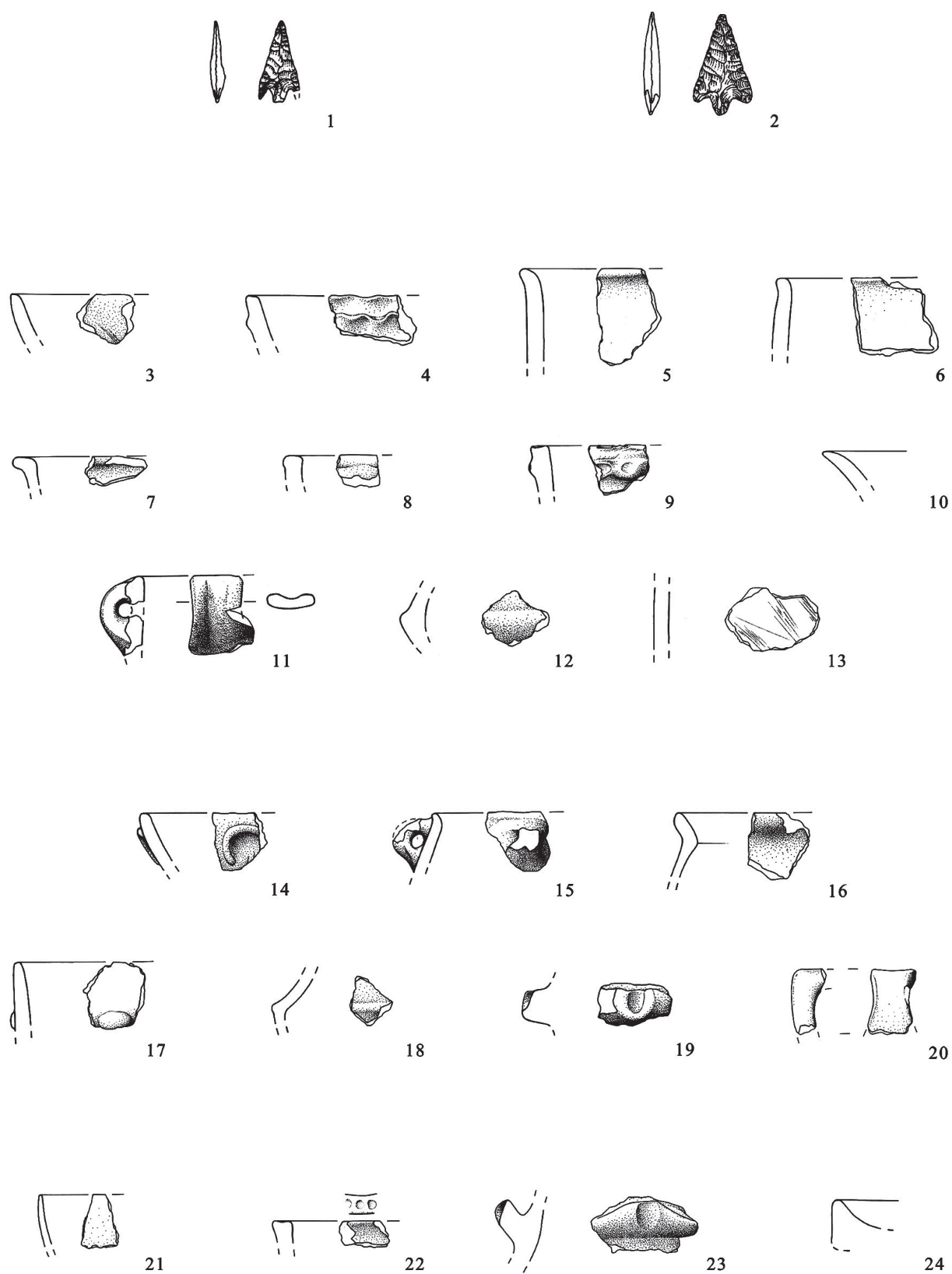


Fig. 2 – Mereto di Tomba, Udine: 1-2. Barbed-and-tanged arrowheads (1:2); 3-24: pottery from lower layers and from above the platform (Eneolithic/EBA, 3-13; EBA, 14-20; MBA, 21-24) (1:3) (drawings by G. Merlatti).

Moving now to the building sequence of the mound, at first glance our stratigraphic data seem to suggest that the monument was raised as a single event coinciding with a major and definitive transformation of the previous ritual stage into a real tumulus. Nevertheless some hints as to the possibility of a more complex pattern of occupation and use deserve our attention. It is indeed worth observing that the building dynamics of the upper part of the monument – characterized by several small mounds superimposed one upon another as a consequence of the height-raising activity – are very different from those of the lower part, which consists of a series of flat and stepped profiles (*fig. 1, 3*). Here, a number of successive stratigraphic “complexes” have been recorded, which roughly correspond to an equal number of building cycles, each one founded on alternate layers of earth and gravel as well as on many wooden supports. At the top of each assemblage a quasi-horizontal continuous tabular profile seemed to indicate a surface for use. While the lack of accumulation deposits pointing to human activity or vegetation growth has prompted us to discredit the hypothesis of separate phases in the construction of the monument with regard to the upper surfaces, on the deepest surfaces of the sequence, those characterized by thin gravel levels which seem to mark the earliest stages in the growth of the mound, scattered evidence of occupation, such as horizontally placed sherds, seemed to suggest something different. Furthermore, some posts related to these earliest surfaces have been supposed to be non-structural (*fig. 1, 3*, painted in black); that is, they would have played no part in the terracing, sustaining and supporting of building materials such as the gravel deposit. On the contrary, they seem to have been raised directly on the occupation level where possibly they stood briefly before being removed. They had nothing to do with the mound building and, as freestanding supports, were rather related to its use as a kind of stage furnished with a structured scenario.²² All this provides further evidence for supposing that the horizontal surfaces – at least in the lower sequence – are the stratigraphic outcome of removal and, in short, that something is missing from our sequence of layers. In such cases these tabular profiles might correspond to intervals in the course of ritual activities whose temporal dimensions have been eliminated from the stratigraphic record.

We may suggest that the supposed general removal of ritual deposits was due to the requirements of the “rule-governance” which, by presiding over ritual activities, could compel the special manipulation of ritual artefacts as well as their removal and careful disposal.

Pits near tumuli have been in certain cases explained as the depositional outcome of ritual activities carried out at the monuments.²³ Unfortunately we cannot verify the existence of similar evidence at Mereto, where the ancient soil has been almost completely eroded by continuous ploughing. For Friuli, we might mention the possible case of Molinat, near Pordenone, where a ritual pit has been excavated near a tumulus.²⁴

3. Summing up, our preliminary data seem to suggest that the monument of Mereto was primarily built less as a tumulus and more as a monumental stage for open-air ceremonies. The ritual power of such an imposing structure was enhanced by its control over the past, incorporating, as it did, several “cultural” items belonging to past human activities. Its main function was originally linked to funerary rituals, which, as the scattered human bones might testify, had possibly been practised on the site since earlier periods, thus pointing to a possible tradition of secondary or delayed funerals, involving the excarnation and manipulation of human remains.²⁵ We cannot exclude, however – as has been put forward in other contexts, illuminated in particular by Joanna Brück²⁶ – the possibility that human remains were used for their talismanic and symbolic value in the framework of manifold communal ceremonies and feasts which

22. Cf. Healy, Harding 2007, p. 59-65.

23. See *e.g.* Healy, Harding 2007, p. 65-66.

24. Corazza *et al.* 2006, p. 74, with literature.

25. For similar monuments as platforms used for excarnation see Mullin 2007; for secondary funerals and ritual manipulation of bones in Eneolithic and Early Bronze Age northern Italy see Barfield 1985, Barfield 1986 and, more recently, de Marinis 2003.

26. Brück 2006, with literature.

were other than funerary and mostly coincided with critical events and liminal situations relevant to the life of local communities.

In the framework of intra-regional contacts, the interaction among neighbouring residential units at communal ritual places would then have been crucial for the negotiation and definition of both group and individual identities.

As time passed the monument possibly underwent, periodically, an articulated sequence of building activities alternating with phases of use and performance, though how long these phases lasted is not at all easy to establish.

It seems possible to suggest that the platform, which did not initially meet the requirement of visibility that we are used to inferring for our tumuli, was transformed into a mound when a new perception of the landscape started to emerge, possibly later in the Bronze Age (Middle-Late Bronze Age?), at the same time as many different types of earthwork – enclosures, ramparts and real hillforts – were densely populating the country. High monuments visible at a distance might then have been perceived as useful for bounding wider territories and marking borders as well as controlling long-distance routes. As opposed to the previous centripetal order which perceived monuments as meeting points and cosmological territorial centres, the new “centrifugal” perception of the landscape was by now possibly related to the emergence of a network of interregional long-distance relationships.²⁷

In conclusion, we feel to have got enough data to assert that, within either a synchronic or diachronic perspective, the phenomenon of tumuli in north eastern Italy was neither homogeneous nor monolithic. It is time to begin to recognize that our monuments might have been invested with many different functions as well as symbolic meanings. Furthermore, as a kind of palimpsest, they might have changed both shape and meaning with time in accordance with the ritual map of a highly mobile local population consisting of small settled groups living in isolated dwellings or sparse clusters of dwellings and investing energy less in settlements and more in places of communal gathering and interaction.²⁸ According to this pattern of regional mobility, people moved around to fulfil their chief social needs such as goods exchange, marriage, friendship and working partnership. And, by finding meaning in some relevant places, they succeeded in manipulating the landscape and taking control of it.

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27. For the centrifugal vs. centripetal order see Snow 2006; for the inception of long-distance exchange in north eastern Adriatic, Borgna, Càssola Guida 2009.

28. See the evidence for the possibility of isolated dwellings at Sant'Odorico di Flaibano (Vitri *et al.* in this volume; Borgna *et al.* forthcoming); on the concept of “moving around” see Cummings 2007; for interaction places, Brück 2000, p. 281; cf. Milner 2004, p. 85-96, p. 281.

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ENEOLITHIC BURIAL MOUNDS IN THE BLACK SEA STEPPE FROM THE FIRST BURIAL SYMBOLS TO MONUMENTAL RITUAL ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

1. First of all, it is important to define the term “mound” in the case of the Black Sea steppe. The term “kurgan” is used in Russian and “mohyla” in Ukrainian. These terms have no scientific differences.

In reality there are differences between the contemporary use of the term “kurgan” and its application to the original constructions. Therefore, it is important today to aim at producing a scientific definition of “Kurgan” as a class of ritual monumental architecture and to assess the dynamics of its development.

2. The first period of development (Early Eneolithic, 4750-4100 B.C.) can be described as a period of emergence of the first burial symbols. During this time burials were marked on the ground surface by simple, small, stone constructions.

3. The second period of development in ritual architecture (Middle Eneolithic, 3800/3700-3500/3400 B.C.) shows a new system in which different cultures display various burial traditions. The first monumental architecture originates in this period. The construction of monuments includes a standard set of building elements: stone circles, ditches and mounds with complex combinations of black earth and clay.

4. The third period of development of ritual monumental architecture (Late Eneolithic, 3500/3400-3000/2900 B.C.) can be considered a direct continuation of the second period but at the local level a separate cultural phenomenon is already identifiable. This period can be considered to be one of full dependence on the Northern Pontic steppes in two agricultural regions: the Trypillia and Maikop-Novosvobodnaia unity.

First of all it is important to define the term “mound” as it is used in the context of the Black Sea steppe. We know this term as “kurgan” in Turkish (Çoruhlu 2006) and “mohyla” in the Ukrainian oral tradition but these words are not scientific determinations. They both designate a simple hill covering a burial. In reality there are differences between the contemporary aspect of “kurgan” or “mohyla”, as they are found in the modern steppe landscape, and the original ritual monuments of ancient times. For this reason, the scientific definition of the “kurgan” as an example of ritual monumental architecture and the study of the emergence and developmental dynamics of these steppe constructions are important questions at the present time.

The general periods in the development of ritual monumental architecture can be identified in the Pontic steppe over almost four millennia from the Early Eneolithic up to the Middle Ages (*table 1*). In this paper I shall limit my commentary to the earliest stage of development based on my previous investigations (Rassamakin 1999, p. 97-129; Rassamakin 2002, p. 60-66; Rassamakin 2004, p. 143-171).

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Archaeological period/culture	Features	cal. B.C.
Early Eneolithic (Skelia culture)	Period of the first burial symbols of elite burials: small natural hills as a burial marker; simple, small, stone or earthen constructions; burials in pits, catacombs or stone cists in pits.	4750 (?)–4200/4100
Steppe “hiatus” (settlements of Serednii Stig II type in the Dnieper area)	Burials in flat cemeteries of the Igren’ VIII type on the Dnieper.	4200/4100–3900/3800
Middle Eneolithic (Lower Mykhailivka culture, Kvitiana culture, Post-Stog group) Late Eneolithic (different local group in the steppe area, Usatovo culture)	First ritual monumental architecture: ditches, cromlechs, stone circles, round and long barrows of black earthen and yellow clay, stone cairns; burials in pits, stone and wooden cists, special ritual places with remains of piles, ceramics, animal bones and wooden constructions. Development of the Middle Eneolithic ritual architecture (the Usatovo culture architecture is most expressive).	3900/3800–3500/3400 3500/3400–3000/2900
Early Bronze Age (Pit-Grave culture, Black Sea steppe) (Kemi-Oba culture, Crimea)	Golden age of earthen ritual architecture, with use of black earthen “bricks” and pieces. Blooming of the ritual stone monumental architecture under influences from Northern Caucasus: cromlechs, cairns, stone and wooden cists with inside walls painted.	3000/3900–2500/2400
Middle Bronze Age (Catacomb culture, Babino culture)	The mound tradition is not developed.	2500/2400–2100/2000 2100/2000–1800/1700
Late Bronze Age (Srubnaia culture)	Development of complex earthen and stone ritual architecture: cromlechs, cairns, ditches, cists, sacred places; round and long barrows with passages, ditches and walls are typical.	1800/1700–1400/1300
Early Iron Age (Scythians)	Development of complex stone and earthen “royal architecture” (height of mounds up to 20m)	VI–IV c. B.C.

Table 1 – The development of ritual architecture in the Black Sea steppe.

THE EARLIEST SYMBOLS (4750–4200/4100 CAL. B.C.)

The development of the earliest “kurgan tradition” can be described as a period of emergence of symbols over rich individual (elite) burials. During this time burials were not only dug in natural hills but also marked on the ground by simple, small, stone constructions. The difficulty lies in the fact that we do not have sufficient information about the frequency of these burial constructions. Therefore, if we are to find a solution to this problem, importance has to be placed on stone constructions, which, according to formal parameters, can be considered equivalent to earthen constructions. The stone constructions of this period include cairns covering burials in pits, catacombs or stone cists. Cists are constructed from stone slabs. Stone cists with cairns are known in the Severski Donets and Azov areas but generally without good field documentation. Examples include the Olkhovatka, Iama and especially Mariupil’ cemeteries (*fig. 1; 2*) but the cairns in the Chapli cemetery on the Dnieper are the best examples (*fig. 3; 4; 5*).



Fig. 1 – Mariupil' cemetery, stone cairn covered burial XXI (after Makarenko 1933, fig. 27).



Fig. 2 – Mariupil' cemetery, burial XXI (after Makarenko 1933, fig. XIII).



Fig. 3 – Chapli cemetery, stone construction covered burial 1a (after Dobrovol'ski 1950, photo archives).



Fig. 4 – Chapli cemetery, burial 1a with stone slabs inside (after Dobrovol'ski 1950, photo archives).



Fig. 5 – Chapli cemetery, stone construction covered burial 3a (after Dobrovol'ski 1950, photo archives).

In general, specific features can be recognized for individual burials of the earliest Eneolithic (not only those with small stone constructions):

1. with natural hills as burial marker;
2. with small earthen or wooden constructions, which are difficult to identify clearly through archaeological investigation.

In all cases, we see the development of a new burial tradition which I identify as the earliest phase of ritual monumental architecture. I think that M. Gimbutas was right when she stated that the first burial constructions, such as small stone cairns, can be identified as the first “kurgans”, as a beginning of the so called “kurgan cultures” (Gimbutas 1994). From my point of view there is little difference between the cairns and the constructions made of black earth blocks or pieces which serve as markers over individual burials in the Early Eneolithic. Both types create an artificial ritual building above a burial.

We also know of similar small constructions of black earth or stone (cairn) over burials in the Middle and Late Eneolithic periods. They were preserved thanks to the later layers which were added to cover Bronze Age burials in multi-layer mounds (*fig. 6*).

Therefore, even at this early period, the “kurgan” already consists of a symbolic, simple ritual construction above one or several burials. It is impossible, however, to refer to this as a developed system of ritual monumental architecture yet. It was only the first step in the process of development.

It has been noted that the earliest “symbolic period” in the development of steppe monumental architecture is limited to a steppe zone between the Northern Caucasus and the Balkan-Carpathians (Rassamakin 2002, p. 60-63). The emergence of these constructions is influenced by external impulses. The first one is connected

to the development of the Balkan-Carpathian metallurgical province (Chernykh *et al.* 1991) and the shaping of an exchange system of prestige goods. The second one is connected to the new Pre-Maikop cultural system (settlements of Svobodnoe, Meshoko, etc.) of the Northern Caucasus. The steppe populations represented by elite burials were involved in this exchange network of prestige goods (Rassamakin 1999, p. 97-112). The emergence of individual burials with prestigious grave goods and the appearance of ritual constructions in the steppe zone between the Northern Caucasus and the Carpathian-Danube region resulted from the development of a new economic and social “world system”. They illustrate the response of a certain stratum of the early pastoral population to its first contacts with early agricultural societies. This process resulted in changes in the spiritual life of the steppe population (initially elite groups only?) and the development of a new funerary tradition.

The majority of radiocarbon dates are associated with the Varna-Karanovo VI-Gumelnița 2 culture and correspond to the comparative analysis of the archaeological materials (*table 2*). There are some problems with the dates of the Kryvyi Rig and Mariupil’ cemeteries. I have recently received a new date for the Kryvyi Rig cemetery (burial 3) (*table 2*, 9) and I consider it to be more accurate as it appears from *table 2*, no. 7 and 8. The two radiocarbon dates of burial XXI of the Mariupil’ cemetery are, in my opinion, doubtful.

No.	Sites	Laboratory	Samples	B.P.	B.C. (OxCal 3.10)	Literature
	<i>Severski Donets area</i>					
1	Aleksandrovska cemetery (in mound 1, burial 46)	Ki-13002	human bone	5690±70	68.2% probability 4650 (2.2%) 4640 4620 (66.0%) 4450 95.4% probability 4690 (95.4%) 4360	Kotova 2006, p. 80, table 14
	<i>Azov Sea area</i>					
2	Mariupil’ cemetery, burial XXI	Ki-9479	human bone	6370±75	68.2% probability 5470 (26.5%) 5400 5390 (41.7%) 5300 95.4% probability 5490 (95.4%) 5210	Kotova 2006, p. 80, table 14
3		Ki-9478	human bone	6320±70	68.2% probability 5380 (68.2%) 5210 95.4% probability 5480 (88.7%) 5200 5170 (6.7%) 5070	
	<i>Dnieper – Ingulets area</i>					
4	Igren’ VIII cemetery, burial 15	Ki-8304	child tooth	5745±60	68.2% probability 4690 (68.2%) 4530 95.4% probability 4720 (95.4%) 4450	Kotova 2006, p. 80, table 14
5	burial 5a	OxA-17541	human bone	5390±33	68.2% probability 4330 (37.0%) 4280 4270 (31.2%) 4230 95.4% probability 4340 (78.8%) 4220 4210 (10.8%) 4160 4130 (1.9%) 4110 4100 (3.9%) 4070	Lillie <i>et al.</i> 2009, p. 262
6	Chapli cemetery, burial 2a	Ki-11079	human bone	5840±90	68.2% probability 4800 (67.1%) 4580 4570 (1.1%) 4560 95.4% probability 4940 (95.4%) 4490	Kotova 2006, p. 80, table 14

No.	Sites	Laboratory	Samples	B.P.	B.C. (OxCal 3.10)	Literature
7	Kryvyi Rig cemetery, burial 3	Ki-8175	human rib	6190±70	68.2% probability 5290 (1.3%) 5270 5230 (66.9%) 5040 95.4% probability 5310 (95.4%) 4960	Kotova 2006, p. 80, table 14
8		Ki-8176	human rib	6020±70	68.2% probability 5000 (68.2%) 4800 95.4% probability 5210 (2.8%) 5160 5080 (92.5%) 4720	
9		Ki-14664	human rib	5430±80	68.2% probability 4360 (56.8%) 4220 4200 (7.8%) 4160 4130 (1.1%) 4120 4100 (2.4%) 4070 95.4% probability 4450 (3.2%) 4410 4400 (92.2%) 4040	new date
<i>Dniestr – Donau area</i>						
10	Cainari	KIA-369	human bone	5580±50	68.2% probability 4455 (68.2%) 4360 95.4% probability 4520 (95.4%) 4330	Govedarica 2004, 82
11	Giurgiulești cemetery, burial 3	Ki-7037	human bone	5560±80	68.2% probability 4490 (68.2%) 4330 95.4% probability 4560 (95.4%) 4240	Kotova 2006, 80, table 14
12	Decea-Muresului, burial 12	KIA-368	human bone	5380±40	68.2% probability 4330 (56.8%) 4220 4200 (11.4%) 4170 95.4% probability 4340 (61.3%) 4220 4210 (17.7%) 4150 4140 (16.3%) 4050	Govedarica 2004, 72

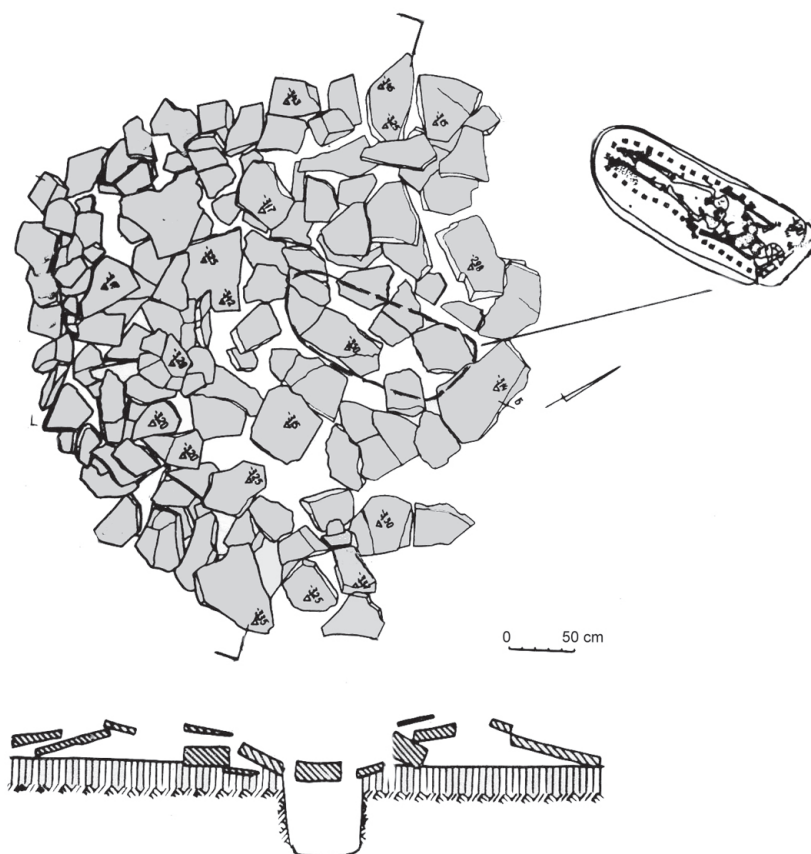
Table 2 – Radiocarbon dates of the Early Eneolithic burials.

REAL MONUMENTAL RITUAL ARCHITECTURE: MIDDLE ENEOLITHIC (3900/3800-3500/3400 CAL. B.C.) AND LATE ENEOLITHIC (3500/3400-3000/2900 CAL. B.C.)

The next step in the development of ritual architecture in the Pontic steppe sees the emergence of four different burial traditions according to the disposal of the dead (Rassamakin 1999, p. 73; Rassamakin 2004, part I, p. 141-142, fig. 111): 1 – extended supine position (with straight legs); 2 – supine with legs flexed in various ways including sessile and disarticulated orientations, characteristic of flat cemeteries; 3 – flexed position on the side, with one arm bent and the other extended, or with both arms extended toward the knees; 4 – strongly flexed position on the side with bent arms and hands in front of the face. The last occurred in the Late Eneolithic only.

The origin of the earliest complex monumental architecture can be linked with the first three burial traditions illustrated by the Kvitiana culture (first tradition), the so-called Post-Stog group (late burials of the second tradition) and the Lower Mykhailivka culture (third tradition) (Rassamakin 2004, part I, p. 185-209). The mounds included a standard set of building elements. Cromlechs of stone slabs or rings of various stone pieces are often present and earthen constructions consist of rings formed by a complex combination of black earth and yellow clay from a ditch (*fig. 7*). Steppe ritual architecture acquires real monumentality during this period: it consists of a set of standard characteristics, which can compare with European megaliths.

Traditionally, Eneolithic steppe mounds are “Round Barrows” according to megalithic terminology (*fig. 8; 9*) but forms similar to “Long Barrows” are attested in some cases (*fig. 10*). Cairns are also to be found (*fig. 6*). It is important to note which are the earliest ritual monumental constructions disseminated in the steppe area, between the Dniestr and Prut rivers, in the zone of contact with the Cucuteni-Trypillia culture. The dating of these complexes is based on imported vessels of the Tripolye B2-C1 and C1 type (*fig. 7; 8*) in the burials of the Post-Stog group (*fig. 7*) and Lower Mykhailivka culture (*fig. 8*) (see also Rassamakin 2002, p. 63-65, *fig. 4.10*). Similar constructions (ditches and cromlechs) on the Severski Donets, on the Lower Don and in the pre-Caucasus correspond to burials with grave goods of the Maikop-Novosvobodnaya unit. This is made clear by the analysis of the Aleksandrovsk cemeteries on the Severskii Donets, as well as isolated burials (Khutor Novy, Konstantinovsk and Khutor Zhukovski) on the Lower Don and on the Manuch and Terek (Rassamakin 2004, part I, p. 161-165, *fig. 121; 122*).



*Fig. 6 – Ivano-Darivka, Artemivs'k district, Donets'k region, mound 1, Eneolithic burial 5 covered by cairn (after Kravets et al. 1991, *fig. 6; 10-12*).*

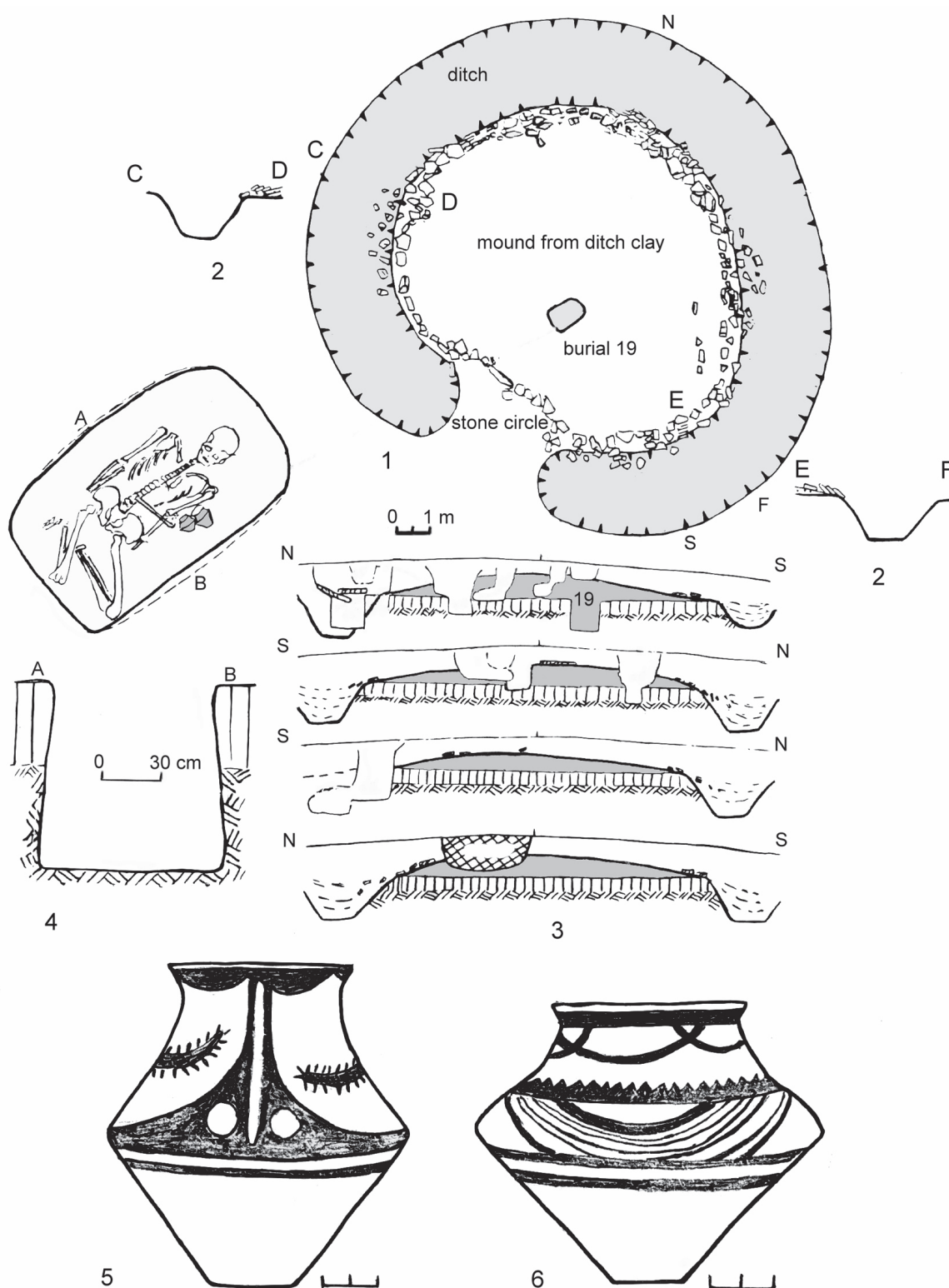


Fig. 7 – Prybuzhany, Voznesens'k district, Mykolaiv region, mound 4, burial 19. The ritual monumental complex includes earth mound, ditch, stone circle and burial in pit with the Trypillia culture vessels (after Shaposhnikova et al. 1982, s. 103-115).

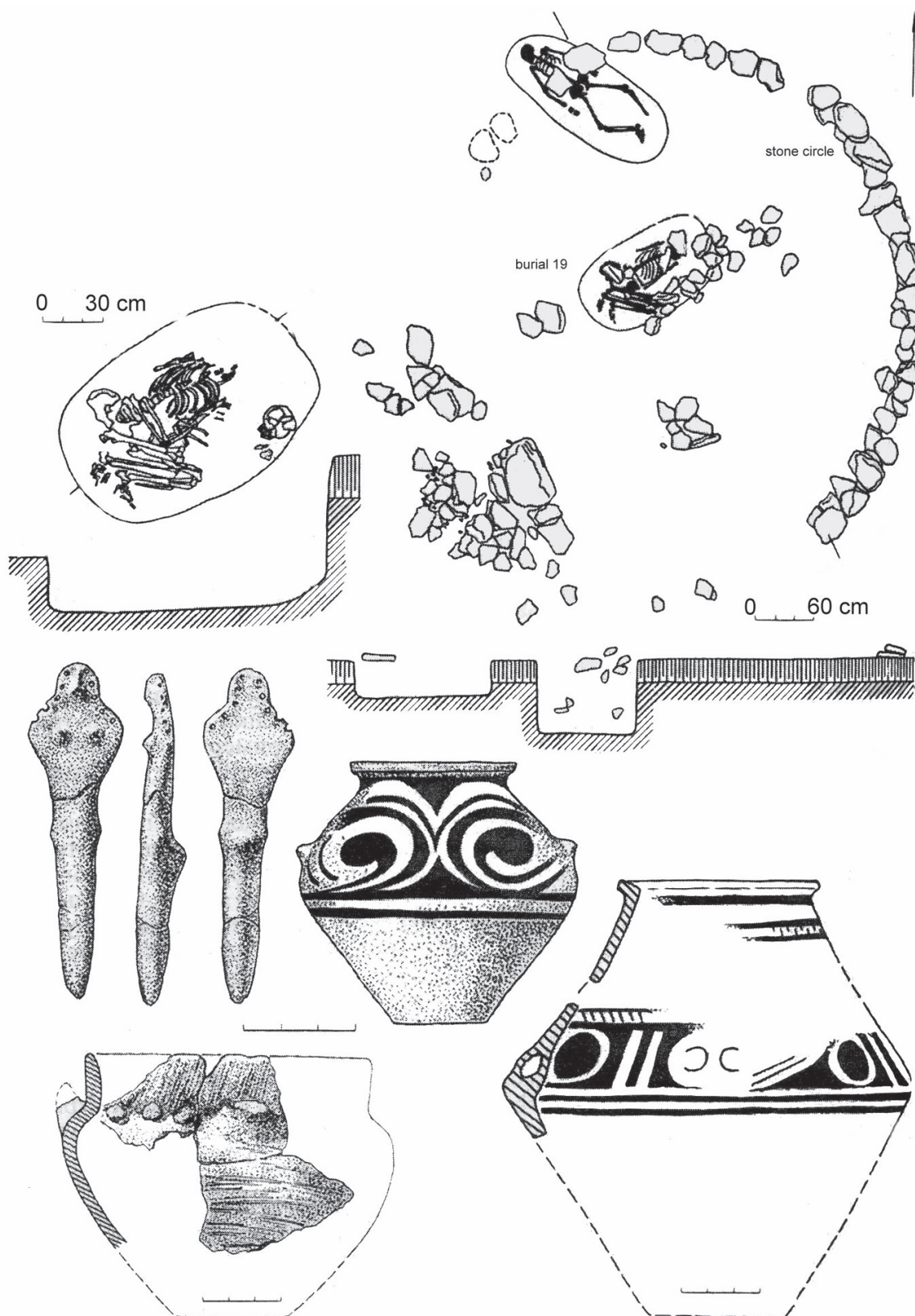


Fig. 8 – Vyshnevyi Sad, Domanivka district, Mykolaiv region, mound 2, burial 7. The ritual complex includes an earth mound within the stone circle with special ditch of pits around the stone circle. The burial is in the pit with the Trypillia culture vessels and figure (after Fomenko 2007, fig. 1, 3).

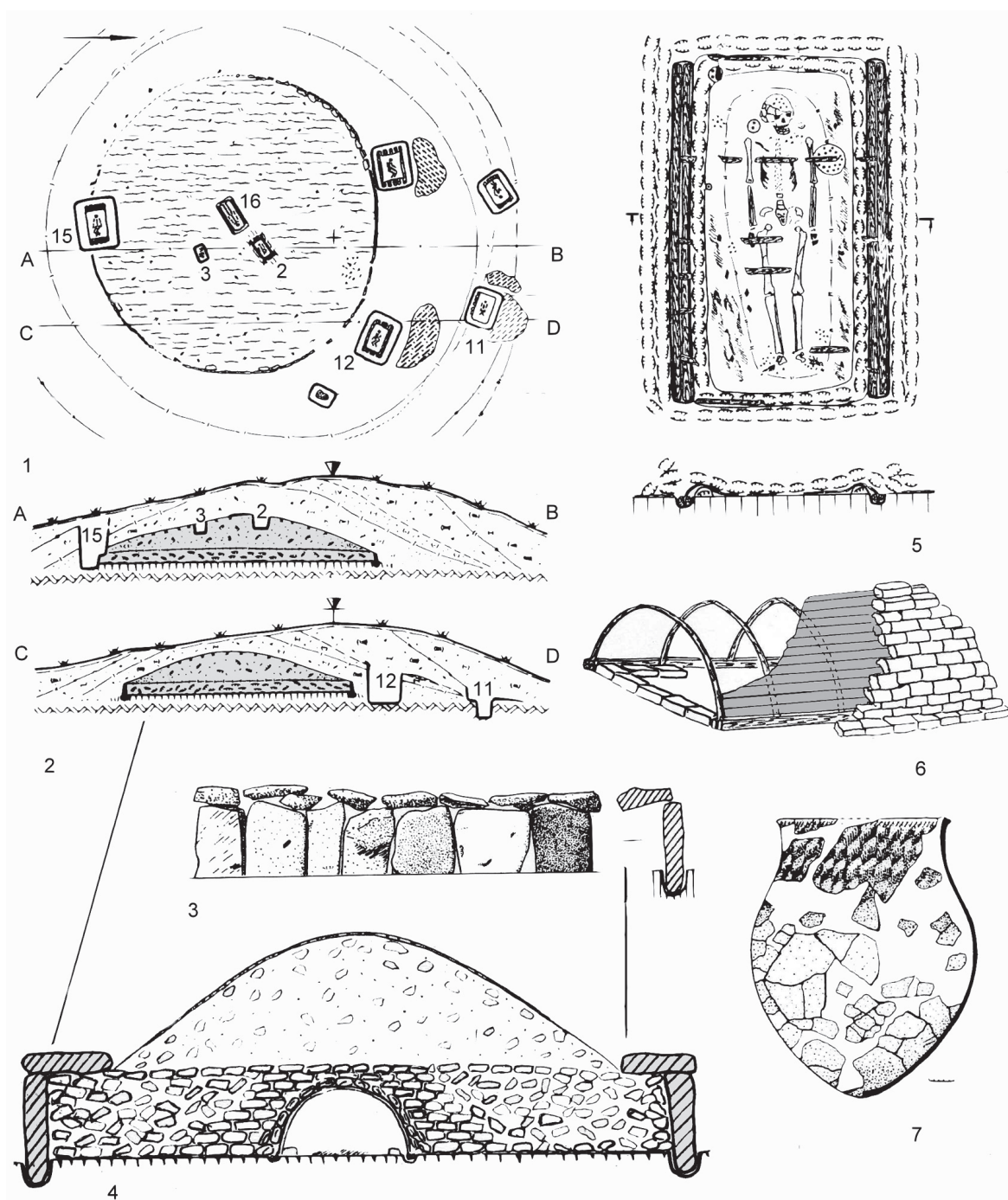


Fig. 9 – Novoaleksandrivka, Solonians'k district, Dnipropetrovs'k region, group I, mound 6, burial 16. The ritual complex with cromlech, burial on the ancient surface inside the wooden construction and the Kvitiana type vessel inside the cromlech on the ancient surface (after Kovaleva 1991, fig. 1-4).

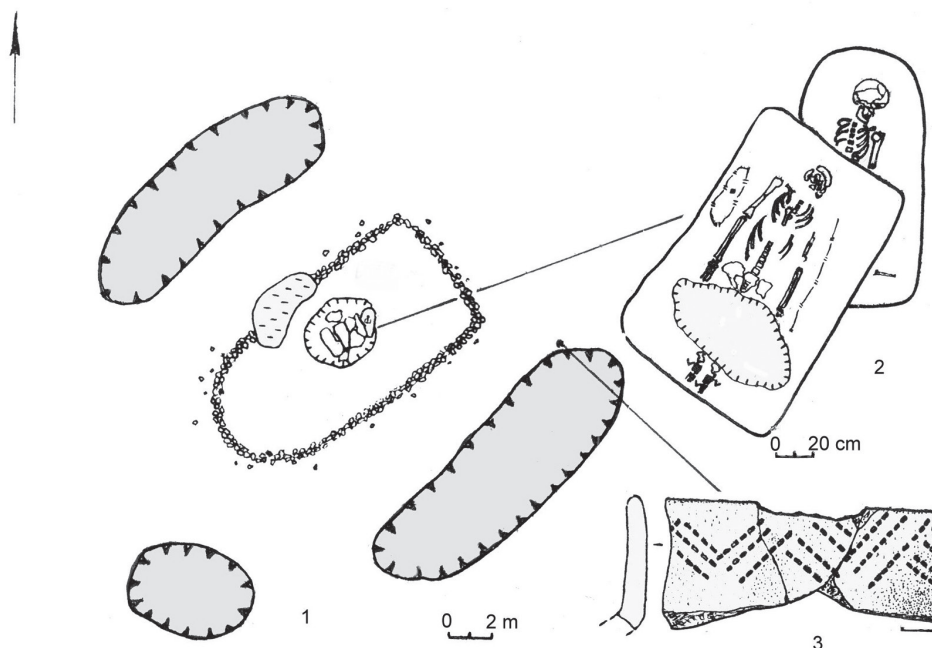


Fig. 10 – Kamenka, Apostolove district, Dnipropetrovs'k region, group V, mound 3, burial 5.
The long barrow with a stone construction (after Androsova et al. 1990, fig. 1).

There is no direct archaeological evidence to show synchronism between the Maikop-Novosvobodnaya unit and the Trypillia B2-C1 and C1 unit. This may be inferred from radiocarbon dates (Rassamakin 2004, part I, p. 171-179, fig. 125) but there are no grounds on which to defend the priority of the Maikop-Novosvobodnaya unit influences from the Northern Caucasus on the origin of ritual monumental architecture in the Pontic steppe. It is also interesting to note that complex monumental architecture is absent from the Northern Caspian area and the Lower Volga.

In the Late Eneolithic the development of ritual monumental architecture (primarily stone architecture) should be considered a direct continuation of the Middle Eneolithic but the cultural system in the Black Sea steppe has changed, following the development of the Middle Eneolithic cultures (Rassamakin 1999, p. 122-125, fig. 3, 49). In my opinion, this period was one of full dependence on two agricultural regions: the Trypillia and Maikop-Novosvobodnaia units. The ritual stone architecture of the Usatovo culture (or Usatovo local group of the Trypillia culture, period C/2) in the Dniester-Donau region is the most significant example (Zbenovich 1974, p. 35-55, fig. 13-17; Subbotin, Petrenko 1986) of this phenomenon.

The monumental architecture of the Maikop-Novosvobodnaia unit, with its typical stone constructions, existed at the same time. Analogies between the Pontic steppe and the Maikop-Novosvobodnaia stone ritual architecture are unknown in the Northern Caspian area and on the Lower Volga during this period. Therefore, it is to be supposed that the appearance and distribution of ritual monumental architecture in the Black Sea steppe originated in an area of durable contacts between the pastoral and agricultural populations (most obviously the Usatovo culture). I do not exclude the possibility that during the Eneolithic the world of agriculture had a significant impact on the spiritual life and social relations of steppe populations and thereby also on the development of complex and monumental ritual architecture. It is notable that the distribution of ritual monumental buildings in the steppe goes along with specific rituals such as the disposal of the dead on its side and the deposition of vessels in the grave (initially imported from the Trypillia unit period and later from Maikop-Novosvobodnaia vessels together with imitations).

In conclusion, the question is whether the appearance and distribution of monumental ritual architecture (the “kurgan tradition”) have an exclusively steppic origin or reflect the transformation of the spiritual and social life of the steppe population (initially in elite groups) under the influence of the agricultural

world. In support of the second hypothesis, the new series of radiocarbon dates from the Kiev Laboratory (N.N. Kovaliukh) for all burials of the Middle Eneolithic (*table 3*) falls within the time span of the Trypillia B/II-C/1 and C/1-C/2 and the Maikop-Novosvobodnaia units.

No.	Sites	Laboratory	Samples	B.P.	B.C. (OxCal v.3.10)
	<i>Molochna river (Azov area)</i>				
1	Vynogradne – 1984, Tokmak district, Zaporizhia region, mound 24, burial 30	Ki-14657	human bone	4980±70	68.2% probability 3920 (13.1%) 3870 3810 (55.1%) 3660 95.4% probability 3950 (95.4%) 3650
2	Vynogradne – 1984, Tokmak district, Zaporizhia region, mound 24, burial 21	Ki-14722	human bone	4910±70	68.2% probability 3770 (68.2%) 3630 95.4% probability 3940 (7.5%) 3850 3820 (80.9%) 3620 3590 (7.0%) 2520
	<i>Samara river (left bank of Dnieper)</i>				
3	Peschanka – 2007, Novomoskovsk district, Dnipropetrovs'k region, group II, mound 1, burial 7	Ki-15169	human bone	4880±70	68.2% probability 3770 (62.3%) 3630 3560 (5.9%) 3530 95.4% probability 3950 (95.4%) 3500
4	Peschanka – 2007, Novomoskovsk district, Dnipropetrovs'k region, group II, mound 1, burial 14	Ki-15172	human bone	4890±60	68.2% probability 3760 (68.2%) 3630 95.4% probability 3800 (85.0%) 3620 3600 (10.4%) 3520
5	Peschanka – 2007, Novomoskovsk district, Dnipropetrovs'k region, group II, mound 1, burial 6	Ki-15168	human bone	4940±70	68.2% probability 3790 (68.2%) 3650 95.4% probability 3950 (95.4%) 3630
	<i>Nikopol' area (right bank of Dnieper)</i>				
6	Ordzhonikidzee – 2003, Nikopol' district, Dnipropetrovs'k region, Shevchenko, mound 29, burial 22	Ki-13871	human bone	4810±80	68.2% probability 3700 (65.5%) 3510 3400 (2.7%) 3380 95.4% probability 3770 (79.1%) 3490 3470 (16.3%) 3370
7	Ordzhonikidzee – 2003, Nikopol' district, Dnipropetrovs'k region, Shevchenko, mound 29, burial 21	Ki-13872	human bone	4720±80	68.2% probability 3640 (25.1%) 3560 3540 (14.6%) 3490 3460 (28.6%) 3370 95.4% probability 3660 (95.4%) 3350
8	Ordzhonikidzee – 2003, Nikopol' district, Dnipropetrovs'k region, Shevchenko, mound 29, burial 20	Ki-14720	human bone	4750±60	68.2% probability 3640 (58.5%) 3510 3430 (9.7%) 3380 95.4% probability 3650 (66.7%) 3490 3470 (28.7%) 3370

Table 3 – Radiocarbon dates of the Middle Eneolithic burials.

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PREHISTORIC BARROW GRAVES BETWEEN THE DANUBE AND THE BALKAN RANGE STRATIGRAPHY AND RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Up to the beginning of the 21st c., in the region between the Danube River and the Balkan range, almost 300 barrow graves dating to the Bronze Age have been investigated. The total number of graves allows a new approach in understanding their systematization, chronological range and geographic distribution.

In the present article, the systematization of the graves has been undertaken while considering the following to be the most significant characteristics: method of disposal; position of the skeleton; grave pit furniture; presence or absence of additional external constructions related to the grave; stratigraphic position of the grave. Following these criteria, three basic groups, each with several sub-groups and variants within them, have been established.

The earliest barrow grave is considered to be an extended inhumation with a ring of stones (cromlech) surrounding the grave pit. The grave has been dated to the end of the Karanovo VI period or the period immediately following it. Some of the primary graves with inhumations in semi-supine position, as well as some of the primary graves with inhumations in hocker position, with or without cromlech, have been assigned to the next chronological period synchronous to the Cernavoda I phenomenon. The majority of the graves have been synchronized with the chronological period Post Cernavoda III Culture – that is, the end of the Early Bronze Age in this region. A considerable proportion of the secondary hocker graves dug into the upper part of the barrow fills have been dated to the Middle and possibly Late Bronze Age.

Until now, cremation barrow graves are known from northwest Bulgaria only and are dated to the Early Bronze Age II period.

Barrow graves have always been of great interest to the scholars investigating the problems of cultural development, trade, migrations or even ethnic attribution of the Chalcolithic-Bronze Age populations in south eastern Europe. Based on their importance, many attempts have been made to classify and determine their chronology and cultural attribution even in vast regions such as those between the Dnester and the Danube (Häusler 1976; Yarovoy 1985; Rassamakin 2004) or in smaller regions such as Moldavia, north Bulgaria, etc. (Dergachev 1986; Panayotov 1989; Nikolova 2000; Burtănescu 2002). Most of these attempts are largely based on the position of the skeleton or its parts in the grave. Considering the region under investigation, as well as the relatively small number of Prehistoric barrow graves, I think that although these classifications are very detailed the application of these models to the data to be presented would not fulfill the main aims of the article.

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Geographically, the region under investigation represents the southern part of the lower Danube basin including present-day north Bulgaria and south eastern Romania. In order to make it easier to work with the data from this region I shall employ the following geographic terms: western region (present-day north western Bulgaria); central region (present-day central north Bulgaria); eastern region (present-day north eastern Bulgaria); north eastern region (present-day Romanian Dobrudza). In the above mentioned regions over three hundred prehistoric barrow graves have been investigated. In my opinion, the most significant characteristics for their classification should be: 1. Method of disposal *i.e.* inhumation, cremation, etc.; 2. Position of the skeleton *i.e.* extended, supine with flexed legs, semi-supine with flexed legs, hocker, parts of the body buried; 3. Grave pit form; 4. Presence or absence of additional external constructions related to the grave. Additional division could be made according to the position of the hands, legs, skull, grave pit furniture, etc. The vast majority of the graves presents inhumation as their method of disposal, although a few graves are characterized by cremation. Considering the hocker inhumation, an additional classification feature will be used according to the angle formed by the spine and the legs: 1. Very much contracted hockers (an angle smaller than 90 degrees); 2. Contracted hockers (an angle of approximately 90 degrees); 3. Relaxed hockers (an angle wider than 90 degrees).¹ The same approach could be used in the case of semi-supine inhumations as well.

STRATIGRAPHIC POSITION OF THE GROUPS

Almost every possible grave group could be found as primary in some barrows. However, in most of those cases the respective barrow has only one grave. Therefore, a stratigraphic analysis of the groups in the “larger” barrows could only help understanding their position in the chronological frame of the periods investigated. These are listed below from west to east.

Tarnava, Barrow I – 10 prehistoric graves

Western region. Grave no. 1 (hocker on the right side/on the belly) is the primary one. The excavator pointed out that “... *above the grave a small barrow has been piled*” (Nikolov 1976, p. 40). Next is grave no. 3 (supine inhumation with flexed legs), above the grave “... *clay has been piled and the already existent barrow enlarged in size*” (Nikolov 1976, p. 41). Stratigraphically, next follow the two stone constructions. The first one is connected to the grave no. 4 – hocker on the right side. It is located in the eastern half of the barrow. The second one is connected with the graves no. 5 (cremation) and 6 (supine with flexed legs). It is located in the “... *western half of the barrow fill of the first construction*”, that is another clue for the existence of the barrow fill above grave no. 4. Above the wooden cover of the second stone construction, earth has been piled so that the barrow was “... *enlarged significantly in size and height*” (Nikolov 1976, p. 41-42). Graves nos. 7-10 (supine inhumations with flexed legs) have been dug into the already existing fill without any additional fill (Nikolov 1976, p. 42-44). In conclusion, grave no. 1 is primary. Graves nos. 2-6 are associated with the additional barrow fill. A relatively short time span for piling the barrow fills for graves nos. 1-6 should be presumed in view of the fact that both the earliest grave (no. 3) and the latest (no. 5) have virtually the same vessels as grave goods. Graves 7-10 are the latest in the barrow without additional barrow fills (Alexandrov 1994).

1. Unfortunately, not all the hocker graves excavated have every necessary detail. Some of the graves with semi-supine position have been described as relaxed hocker or vice versa (see Vasiliu 1995a, p.51). That is why the hocker graves will be discussed according to the clear data only; therefore some of the graves will be excluded from the analysis.

Goran-Slatina, Barrow II – 4 (?) prehistoric graves

Central region. The earliest feature in the barrow is a pit with steps of irregular oval form. There are stones in the south eastern corner and few human and animal bones in the fill. Grave no. 13, an extended inhumation in a four-sided pit, is the earliest grave. There is, however, no data for the covering of the pit and the floor. The left hand is at the chest while the right one is near the shoulder. The orientation is west-east and there are no signs of red ochre nor associated material. Graves nos. 4 and 18 are secondary. Grave no. 4 is an extended inhumation in a four-sided pit. There are no data about the covering of the pit and the floor. The right arm is alongside the body while the left hand is at the shoulder. The orientations are both northwest-southeast. There is red ochre over the upper parts of the legs, pelvis, torso and the left hand. A piece of red ochre was found 15cm to the left of the skull. The inventory included a gold pendant to the left of the skull, a necklace of silver beads beneath the skull and sherds from a vessel southwest of the skull. Grave no. 18 is a semi-supine inhumation to the right with flexed legs in an oval pit, orientated west-east. An organic sheet was laid beneath the skeleton and red ochre put over the bones. The inventory includes three silver spirals and a necklace of human and animal teeth. It is very difficult to differentiate the last two graves stratigraphically. However, grave no. 4 is located in the barrow centre and has a similar position and orientation of the skeleton as the earlier grave no. 13 (Kitov *et al.* 1991, p. 56-61).

Goran-Slatina, Barrow III – 9 prehistoric graves

Central region. In the original report of the excavations the stratigraphy of all nine prehistoric graves in the barrow is not quite clear. The lack of profiles of the respective barrow fills does not allow a clear picture of the internal chronology of the graves. It is obvious that grave no. 9 is primary with an inhumation in a large rectangular pit (2.15 x 1.15 x 0.70m). The pit had been covered with wooden planks. The skeleton laid on an organic sheet in a semi-supine position to the left, orientated east/northeast-west/southwest. The left arm was near the body. The same position is mentioned for the other arm but one can see from the illustrations that the right hand radial bone is in an unusual position. This can be explained if one accepts that the original position would have been at the pelvis and that it only later fell down near it. Red ochre is mentioned over the bones as well as “... *relatively large quantity of ochre in the grave*” including “... *pieces of considerable size*”. The grave had been surrounded with a ring of stones with a diameter of 8.6m. The wall is up to 0.65m thick and up to 0.40m high (3-4 rows of stones). The form and dimensions of the fill of the barrow above the grave has not been established. However, the stone wall had an inclination to the outside. This could be a clue that the original barrow fill put pressure on the wall from the inside and as a result the ring itself encircled and strengthened the fill that probably had a diameter of approximately 9m.

The graphic documentation shows that the graves in discussion are earlier than graves nos. 1, 3 and 4. Whilst graves 3 and 4 do not offer much data as to the body position (destroyed skeletons of children, the first one probably in supine position with flexed legs), grave no. 1 offers much clearer data. The skeleton is in supine position with flexed legs, right arm alongside the body, the left one beside the pelvis. Orientation is southwest-northeast. There were signs of an organic layer beneath the skeleton as well as red ochre over the skull, ribs and pelvis. The pit had been covered with wooden planks. The grave itself contained rich grave goods – a necklace composed of 2 golden beads, several silver and copper beads and 1 bone bead. Grave no. 3 also revealed a rich array of grave goods – gold hair-ring, silver hair-rings and beads, a bone bead, a shell and a clay vessel. Graves nos. 2 and 5 had the same position of the skeletons, namely, supine with flexed legs.² Graves nos. 1-5 have all the characteristics of the Pit-grave culture burial monuments. The position of graves nos. 6 and 7 in relation to grave no. 8 is not quite clear. In the original publication, the stratigraphic

2. The position of the skeleton of Grave no. 2 was originally published as extended but the left leg is flexed. It is very likely that the original position was with flexed legs which later fell down. Such a phenomenon is not unusual in barrow graves.

order is described as Graves nos. 9-8-6, 7. However, the basic criteria used for establishing this sequence is the depth of the graves according to the point “0” – the highest point of the barrow. According to the published data, grave pit no. 8 had been dug from the same level as Grave no. 9. The distance between the two graves is about 7m. If one accepts that the first barrow fill (Grave no. 9) had a diameter of 9m, then the pit of grave no. 8 should have been dug outside the already existing barrow at a distance of approximately 2.5m from it and the barrow fill above grave no. 8 should have covered the original fill as well. Grave no. 8 presented an inhumation in a four-sided pit without a wooden covering. The skeleton laid on an organic sheet in supine position with flexed legs. The arms had been banded at the elbows, with hands at both sides of the pelvis. The legs were in a “rhomb” position. Orientation of the body was west/northwest-east/southeast. Red ochre was found over the bones. The material included two silver multi-spiral hair-rings and a bronze chisel. The grave itself also had all the characteristics of the Pit-Grave Culture. According to our knowledge, the Pit-Grave Culture graves are secondary in some earlier barrows but always dug into the pre-existing barrow fill. Therefore, it seems quite logical to adopt the following sequence of the graves: no. 9 with the first barrow fill; nos. 6 and 7 with the second barrow fill; no. 8 dug into the second fill at the time when nos. 4, 1 2, 5 were set in the third barrow fill, nos. 4, 1 2, 5 (Kitov *et al.* 1991, p. 30-31, 62-74).

Goran-Slatina Barrow V – 10 prehistoric graves

Central region. All the graves consisted of inhumations in supine position with flexed legs, arms alongside the body or in the pelvis area, more or less bent at the elbows. Grave no. 6 is primary, the floor and the walls of the pit were lined with wooden planks and the pit itself was covered with crossway wooden planks. Next in order come grave no. 7 with its floor covered with wooden planks and the other eight graves in rectangular pits, with or without an organic floor covering (Kitov *et al.* 1991, p. 83-86, 89).

Goran-Slatina Barrow VII – 5 prehistoric graves

Central region. Primary is grave no. 5; a relaxed hocker inhumation on the left side in a rectangular pit, orientated southwest-northeast. There was red ochre over the bones and pieces of red ochre near the skull. An organic sheet was placed beneath the skeleton. The pit had been covered by wooden planks. There was no grave goods. Grave no. 4 follows; semi-supine position to the right, hands alongside the body in a rectangular pit with organic sheets over the pit floor and covering of wooden planks. There was red ochre over the skull but again no grave goods. Stratigraphically later are graves nos. 1 and 3, with skeletons in supine position flexed legs and arms alongside the body in both of them. It seems that the destroyed grave no. 2 had a skeleton in the same position as in graves nos. 1 and 3 (Kitov *et al.* 1991, p. 90-96).

Polsko Kosovo, Barrow I – 4 prehistoric graves

Central region. Grave no. 1 is the primary one in the form of an extended inhumation in a four-sided pit with no covering. The pit floor had been covered with red ochre and the hands placed alongside the body, which was orientated east-west. Red ochre was found over the bones but no grave goods. A ring of stones with a diameter of 9m surrounded the grave. Next, stratigraphically, is grave no. 2, an inhumation in a semi-supine position to the left with flexed legs, the right arm at the abdomen and the left hand in front of the head. The grave was orientated west-east. There is no data about the pit but a wooden covering of the skeleton is mentioned. Red ochre was found over the bones. No grave goods. Over the grave a thick layer of “... wooden ashes and charcoal” up to 0.60m thick had been deposited. Grave no. 3 follows; a relaxed hocker inhumation on the left side with the right arm at the abdomen and the left hand beneath the skull. General orientation was west-east and red ochre was found over the bones. However there is neither data

about the pit nor grave goods. The last grave is no. 4; an inhumation in supine position with flexed legs in a four-sided pit without external constructions, orientated south-north. The floor of the pit had been covered with an organic sheet and red ochre was found over the bones and the organic sheet. There was no grave goods and no signs of a top covering of the pit (Stančev 2002, p. 520-522).

Kalugeritsa, Barrow III – 4 prehistoric graves

Eastern region. The primary grave is no. 4; a relaxed hocker inhumation on the right side, hands beneath the skull, orientated east-west with red ochre over the upper part of the skeleton. The grave pit was rectangular and the floor and walls of the pit had been lined with wooden planks. The pit had been covered with wooden planks as well. The inventory included a silver open ring on the chest. The grave was surrounded by a ring of three rows of stones with a height of 0.60m and a diameter of 11m. Next in the stratigraphic order comes grave no. 3, with an extended inhumation and no data about the pit; followed by grave no. 3 with a skeleton in supine position with flexed legs fallen down to the right, the left hand alongside the body and the right hand on the pelvis. Grave no. 2 came last, dug into the barrow fill with a skeleton in supine position with flexed legs, hands alongside the body and red ochre over the skull (Mikov 1936, p. 4-5).³

Kiulevcha, Barrow I – 5 prehistoric graves

Eastern region. Primary is grave no. 3 with a relaxed hocker inhumation on the right side in an oval pit, orientated northeast-southwest with red ochre over the skull and torso. The pit was encircled by a single row of stones with a diameter of 3m. The grave was originally published as a secondary one. But, according to the published data, it seems unlikely. For the following reason: an area of *ca.* 3.5 x 3.5m (the minimum surface needed for the stone ring to be built) x 3m (height of the barrow fill above the grave) would have to have been removed if we accept that grave no. 5 was the primary grave as published. It seems more likely that grave no. 3 is the primary one followed by grave no. 5 that consists of a rectangular pit in the periphery of the original smaller barrow; it is covered with wooden planks and contained an inhumation in supine position with flexed legs. Above this a secondary fill was added, into which grave no. 2 was dug. It contained an inhumation in supine position with flexed legs. Grave no. 1, which contained a hocker inhumation, came later. Both skeletons had red ochre over the bones. The position of grave no. 4, a hocker with a cuboid stone construction, is not clear. It is even possible that it dates to the Iron Age (Mikov 1936, p. 8).

Riltsi, Barrow no. 264 – 5 prehistoric graves⁴

Eastern region. The primary grave was Grave no. 4. It contained an inhumation in supine position with flexed legs in a rectangular pit, orientated southwest-northeast with red ochre over the bones. There was no grave goods though the pit had been covered with wooden planks. Next follows grave no. 5. It contained a semi-supine inhumation to the right in a rectangular pit, orientated southwest-northeast with red ochre over the skull and pelvis. There was a bovine bone near the skull and the pit was not covered. Graves nos. 1-3 (without pit-data) were all dug into the humus at the top level of the barrow fill. According to the depth and the observations during the excavations the sequence would have been as follows: grave no. 3, an extended inhumation with hands at the pelvis, orientated south-north and with red ochre over the skull and torso and

3. In the original publication, graves nos. 1 and 2 have been described as hockers, but the graphic illustration clearly shows that the position is supine with flexed legs. For the correct position of the bodies in the graves, see Panayotov 1989, p. 74-75.

4. Excavations directed by the author.

pieces of red ochre between the left hand and torso, without grave goods. Graves nos. 1 and 2 were very much contracted hocker inhumations on the right side with pieces of red ochre near the bones.

Shabla, Barrow no. 3 – 4 prehistoric graves

Eastern region. Grave no. 3 had a supine inhumation with flexed legs in a four-sided pit and was primary. The floor of the pit was covered with an organic sheet. The grave was orientated east/northeast-west/southwest and there was red ochre over and around the bones. According to stratigraphy, the next grave is no. 2, a hocker (semi-supine?) inhumation on the right side in a four-sided pit without external constructions, orientated northwest-southeast with red ochre on the skull, chest and arms. The pit had not been covered. Grave no. 1 had a very much contracted hocker inhumation on the right side, orientated north-south with a piece of red ochre in front of the arms. There is no pit data since Grave no. 1 has been destroyed (Georgieva 1991, p. 1-5).

Chilie Veche, Barrow I – 27 graves

North eastern region. 14 graves (nos. 62, 76, 86, 88-95, 100, 102, 105) with supine inhumations and flexed legs are described as primary. The second group is composed of 13 secondary graves dug into the barrow fill in a “*slightly contracted*” or “*accentually contracted*” position. The photos show that at least a few of these graves actually have skeletons in semi-supine position (Vasiliu 1995a, p. 49-57, pl. I/2, 3). According to F. Burtănescu, grave no. 1 should be connected to the Catacomb culture (Burtănescu 1996, p. 102).

Luncavița, Barrow Mocuța – 16 graves

North eastern region. Three graves (nos. 1, 8, 15) with supine inhumations and flexed legs are described as primary. The second group is composed of 13 secondary graves dug into the barrow fill in a “*slightly contracted*” or “*accentually contracted*” position. The group is situated in the south western part of the barrow (Vasiliu 1995b, p. 89-94). The vessel from grave no. 15 has been synchronized with Ezero XIII (Burtănescu 2002, p. 266).

Luncavița, Drumul vacilor, Barrow I – 8 graves

North eastern region. Five graves (nos. 4-8) are described as being “...*dug from the ancient walking level*”. Grave no. 5 (a cenotaph?) is located in the barrow centre. Two relaxed hocker graves in rectangular pits (nos. 6 and 7) are located northwest from it. Two inhumations in supine position with flexed legs in rectangular pits (nos. 4 and 8) are located east of grave no. 5. The last group of graves (nos. 1-3) is composed of “*slightly contracted*” hocker graves dug into the barrow fill (Vasiliu 1995c, p. 117-121). Graves nos. 5-8 date to Late Usatovo (Burtănescu 2002, p. 411, note 48) according to their grave goods.

Mihai Bravu, Barrow III – 2 graves

North eastern region. The primary grave is no. 1, an inhumation in supine position with flexed legs in a rectangular pit covered with wooden planks. The grave had been surrounded by a cromlech. Stratigraphically, next is grave no. 2, a “*slightly contracted*” hocker dug into the barrow fill (Vasiliu 1995d, p. 146-147).

Zebil, Barrow I – 15 graves

North eastern region. According to G. Simion, graves nos. 1, 5-7, 13-15 had their own small barrow and had been united into a large one. However, according to the drawings, grave no. 2 postdates grave no. 1. The drawings do not show convincingly that there is an actual small barrow on the other graves as well. It seems possible that grave no. 1 is primary, followed by 6 other graves (nos. 2, 5-7, 13, 15). All those graves have relaxed hocker burials in rectangular pits (in some cases with steps) covered by wooden planks. Large quantities of ochre are mentioned as well. It is interesting to note that these graves form a circle around the primary one. The relation of grave no. 13, a rectangular pit which contained a skeleton in supine position with flexed legs, to the first group is not quite clear. It is later than grave no. 1 and, according to the plan, is situated into the above mentioned circle. It is our opinion that grave no. 13 is later than the other graves. The last group is composed of 7 (8?) graves (nos. 3, 3a, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) dug into the barrow fill, consisting of mere accumulation of human bones (Simion 2003, p. 22-23, fig. 8-9).

Sarichioi, Barrow I – 10 graves

North eastern region. The primary is no. 1, an inhumation in supine position with flexed legs in a rectangular pit with a cromlech. The next stratigraphical group is composed of 4 graves (nos. 2-5) described as hockers in rectangular pits covered with wooden planks. According to the drawings, at least the skeleton grave no. 3 is in semi-supine position to the left. The last group is composed of 5 graves cut into the barrow fill consisting of a mere accumulation of human bones (Simion 2003, p. 20-21, fig. 7).

Independența (ex Murighiol), barrow no. 4 – 15 graves

North eastern region. The primary grave is pit 1, (the “...destroyed primary grave”) without an additional covering of wooden planks but with a cairn of stones above it. The whole construction was surrounded by a ring of stones and finally covered by an earthen barrow. The pit is followed by a complex of 14 poorly preserved graves. The earliest one contained an inhumation in a supine position with flexed legs. Graves nos. 3, 4 and 12 contained hocker inhumations. The other graves contained clusters or fragments of bone. It is not possible to differentiate the secondary graves stratigraphically (Simion 1991, p. 33-36; Simion 1992, p. 198-199, pl. 17).

RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY

Considering the relative chronology of the graves discussed, we think it necessary to focus, first of all, on two basic chronological horizons with barrow graves in the Lower Danube, namely Cernavodă I and Pit-Grave burials.

Cernavodă I Period

Cernavodă I mortuary practices have been subject to several different approaches and studies. Both barrows and flat graves have been included in the group of Cernavodă I funerary complexes. The largest one has now proved to be the flat cemetery near Brăilița with a total number of 125 graves; 117 have skeletons in extended position and 8 in hocker position (Hartuche 2002, p. 127). The flat cemetery near Gherășeni in north Muntenia, as well as some isolated graves from Cernavodă “Dealul Sofia”, have also

been mentioned (Manzura 1999, p. 115-119). The barrow graves group includes the hocker grave from Agigea (Haşotti 1997, p. 130-132), the relaxed hocker grave from Anadolkiöi as well as the hocker grave from Baia-Hamangia in Dobrudza (Manzura 1999, p. 116).

Barrow graves from the same period have been assigned to the so called “*Bassarabian variant of the Cernavodă I Culture*” or “*Hadzider – Cernavodă I*” group in the region between the Prut and Dnestar rivers. As mentioned, the base of the barrows were frequently surrounded by cromlechs, sometimes the surface of barrows was “...*plated partially or wholly by stones*”. Timber structures, stone enclosures, pits, bonfires, etc. were used in the mortuary rituals. The deceased were buried in semi-supine position to the left/right, with one arm extended to the knees and the other with the hand at the pelvis or across the body. Occasionally, the extended position was preferred. Orientation was with the head to the northeast-east. Considerable quantities of ochre were used during the rituals; the dead and the pit floor have often been completely covered with ochre. The number of grave goods is insignificant and rarely included gold and silver objects. The “*Bassarabian variant*” graves always precede the Usatovo graves and follow the Suvorovo ones. Generally, they are synchronous with the Cucuteni B-Tripolje C1 period (Manzura 1993, p. 29-30; Manzura 1994, p. 95-99; Manzura 1995, p. 9-12; Manzura 1999, p. 115-116).

Apart from the “*Hadzider – Cernavodă I*” group, graves belong to E. Yarovoj’s “*Hadzider-Zivotilovka*” chronological group. This group is characterized by barrow hocker graves with some exceptions and, according to E. Yarovoj, is the earliest chronological barrow group in the region. Thirty seven graves have been included in the group, of which 1/3 had cromlechs or stone constructions as well as other constructions related to different ritual activities. According to E. Yarovoj the group itself could be divided into an earlier one called “*Hadzider*”/“*Cernavodă I*” and a later one called “*Zivotilovka*”, both groups being earlier than the Late Tripolje grave complexes (Yarovoj 2000, p. 14-18).

The short review presented above shows undoubtedly that during the Cernavodă I period there existed barrow graves in the north western Pontic area. North of the Danube some indications points to the Coslogeni barrow whose primary grave (a hocker) has been connected to the pottery fragments discovered in the barrow fill and dated by P. Roman to the period “*end of Cernavodă I - beginning of Cernavodă III*” (Cavruc, Neagu 1995; Burtănescu 2002, p. 410). The barrow no. 1, grave no. 1 at Belitsa, could be connected to the same period. It is a relaxed hocker inhumation on the right side in a four-sided pit with steps. The skeleton has been partially destroyed. The left hand is at the pelvis area and the burial is orientated east-west with red ochre on the upper torso, the lower half of the legs, the feet and over a large area in front of the body from neck to pelvis. The pit had been covered with wooden planks and an organic sheet covered the pit floor under the body. The grave goods consisted of two metal spirals. Above the pit an enclosure of plasters (hearth?) was discovered (Alexandrov, Benham 1995). Other hocker or semi-supine barrow graves that fit the above mentioned characteristics and could be related to the Cernavodă I period are as follows: Goran-Slatina – Barrow no. 3, grave no. 9 (Kitov *et al.* 1991, p. 73-74);⁵ Polsko Kosovo, Barrow no. 1, grave nos. 2 and 3 (Stančev 2002, p. 520);⁶ Kalugeritsa, Barrow no. 3, grave no. 4 (Mikov 1936, p. 4-5);⁷ Madara Barrow no. 4, grave no. 4 (relaxed hocker inhumation on the right side, orientated northeast-southwest without an inventory) (Mikov 1934, p. 436).

Pit-grave Culture

The Pit-grave Culture in the north western Pontic region has been the subject of much analysis. Although even today some authors accept the idea that all the prehistoric barrow graves in Bulgaria belong to the “Pit-grave” Culture (Nikolova 1999, p. 369-389; Nikolova 2000), most of the researchers agree that the Pit-grave Culture, at its initial stage in the region, has the following characteristics: inhumation in supine position with flexed legs, in a rectangular pit; the pit floor is covered by an organic sheet or red ochre layer;

5. See the discussion above.

6. See the discussion above.

7. See the discussion above.

parts of the body, most of all the skull, pelvis, wrists and feet are covered with red ochre; the pit is covered by wooden planks; the grave goods are generally poor and dominated by metal spiral-rings.

The first stage of the Pit-grave Culture's presence is associated with the so called "*Dnestar*" and "*Lower-Danube*" groups in the north western Pontic and northern regions of Bulgaria respectively (Dergačev 1986, p. 74-82; Panayotov 1989, p. 43-60; Yarovoy 2000, p. 21-22). Chronologically, the first "wave" of Pit-grave Culture graves is to be dated to a post-Usatovo period and synchronized with the Zimnicea-Celei-Ezero A1 chronological horizon and the Cernavodă II Culture (Dergačev 1999, p. 205-207; Alexandrov 2002, p. 143-144; Burtănescu 2002, p. 265-267).

The second stage of the presence of the Pit-grave Culture is connected to the so-called "*Budjak*" groups in the north western Pontic area. The vast majority of the graves are secondary. The semi-supine position dominates. This stage is synchronous with the Glina III and Edineț Cultures and, partially, with the Catacomb Culture (Dergačev 1994, p. 126-127). Similar observations have been made in north Bulgaria as well (Panayotov 1989, p. 56).

GRAVE GROUPS ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF BURIAL

Taking into account the stratigraphic analysis of the barrows, as well as the above mentioned chronological horizons with barrow graves, the following conclusions can be made about grave groups:

Extended inhumations

1. Extended inhumations in barrow that stratigraphically precede the Cernavodă I Culture barrow graves. For now, only *Polsko Kosovo grave no. 1* belongs to this group. The best parallel comes from Moldavia, Etulia II, Barrow I, grave 15 (Boroziyak 1984, p. 82-86) connected to the Suvorovo group (Dergačev 1986, p. 65-74). At the end of the 20th c., the total number of the extended inhumations with cromlech amounts to at least 16. Geographically, they are located in the Dnepr river region, with only Etulia being in the vicinity of the Danube (Rassamakin 2004b, fig. 15a). Therefore, the Polsko Kosovo grave is the most western occurrence of these graves and, considering the analysis above, could date to even before the Cernavodă I period.

2. Extended inhumations in barrows with a stratigraphic position between the Cernavodă I and Pit-Grave Culture graves; Goran-Slatina III/6,7, Kalugeritsa III/3 enter this group. According to the typology of the extended barrow graves in Moldavia all three graves enter group I, that is, extended inhumations in oval pits. The group has been synchronized with Hadgider-Cernavodă I and the Usatovo monuments, always preceding the Pit-grave Culture graves (Levițki *et al.* 1996, p. 60-63, 66). It is possible that Madara IV/3 belongs to the same group as well. North of the Danube, the same holds true for Vitănești, Barrow I, grave no. 3 (Leahu, Trohani 1979, p. 128-133, fig. 3/1). According to some authors the grave at Vitănești, together with the graves at Sabangia, Gradistea Coslogeni, are the earliest barrow graves in south eastern Romania (Burtănescu 1996, p. 92).

3. Extended barrow inhumations that are probably synchronous with the Pit-Grave Culture graves include Goran-Slatina, II/4,13 and Zeglătzi-Orlyak, II/1. Goran-Slatina, barrow 2, grave no. 4 contained a golden hair-ring, a necklace of 30 silver beads and a vessel with thickening of the inner rim and a tunnel lug or lugs (Kitov *et al.* 1991, p. 57-60, fig. 31; 33). The vessel has its best parallels in Sucidava-Celei north of the Danube, dated to the EBA 1b (Alexandrov 2002). The golden jewellery does not contradict the proposed dating.

4. Extended inhumations in barrows that are later than Pit-Grave Culture graves. Extended inhumations with hands alongside the body in four-sided pits with no other constructions. Goran-Slatina III/2 and Chilia veche II/2 and probably Riltzi II/3 belong to this group. According to some authors Chilia veche II/2

should be connected to the Catacomb Culture or even later, to the Belozerka Culture (Burtănescu 1996, p. 91-92). According to the typology of the extended barrow graves in Moldavia the graves in discussion belong to group 3; extended inhumations in rectangular pits. They are always later than the other extended inhumations and could be synchronized with the Dnestar variant of the “Jamna” culture graves (Levițki *et al.* 1996, p. 61-62). For now, there is no evidence connecting this group to the Pit-grave Culture.

Supine inhumations with flexed legs

Three groups can be made according to the treatment of the floor of the pit: 1. the floor of the pit is covered with a layer of red ochre; all of these graves fall within the north eastern region; 2. the floor of the pit is covered with an organic sheet and the floor/walls with wooden planks; central and eastern regions; 3. no covering on the floor; found in all regions but, considering the information level, one can assume that the situation is specific to central and western regions. In fact there is no covering of the floor in the western region.

At present, there is no sufficient data to confirm that supine inhumations with flexed legs are earlier than the Usatovo-Cernavodă III phenomenon. Nor is there any evidence to date it to the Middle or Late Bronze Age. Based on the grave good, the earliest graves should date to the Zimnicea-Celei period in the Lower Danube region, that is roughly synchronous with the beginning of Ezero A stage of the Bronze Age in Thrace (Alexandrov 2002, p. 146-147). In the western region graves with supine inhumations with flexed legs appear until the Early Bronze Age III stage, for example Tarnava, Barrow I, graves nos. 7-10 (Alexandrov 1994). Similar graves also appear in the same period in south western Romania (Berciu, Roman 1984). In my opinion, all the graves from this group should be attributed to the Pit-grave Culture.

Semi-supine inhumations

Geographically, they are spread over the central, eastern and north eastern regions with a decreasing number from northeast to southwest. Some of the relaxed semi-supine inhumations could be assigned to the Cernavodă I period, as argued above. The position of the contracted semi-supine inhumations such as those from Izbul for example (Kitov 2000) is not quite clear. Considering the Riltzi barrow II stratigraphy, at the present stage of research, this group is to be connected to the Pit-grave Culture.⁸

Hocker graves

1. Relaxed hocker graves. They are spread over all the regions investigated. A particular group of primary graves with pits containing steps; additional constructions in the barrow fill such as fire places, hearths, etc. could be distinguished. Zebil I/1,2,5-7,14,15 (Simion 2003, p. 21-23), Tulcea-sud (Simion 2003, p. 17), Anadolkioi II/1 (Schuchardt, Traeger 1918), Belitsa, Goran-Slatina VII/5 and Tarnak I/2 (Torbov 1994) graves belong to this group. A sub-group is formed by Kalugeritsa III/4 and Kiulevcha I/3, characterized by relaxed hocker inhumations with stone rings around the graves. When the graves mentioned are not the only graves in their respective barrows, they are always earlier than supine inhumations with flexed legs. As discussed above, these graves have characteristics very similar to those of the Cernavodă I Culture. However, some of the graves in the north eastern region such as Luncavița “Drumul vacilor”, nos. 6 and 7, are connected to the Late Usatovo period (Burtănescu 2002, p. 411). Considering the fact that there is no indisputable evidence to distinguish between this group and Cernavodă I or Cernavodă III-Usatovo, a presumed date in both periods is the only logical conclusion at the present stage of the investigation.

8. See the discussion above.

2. Contracted hocker graves. Geographically, they are spread in the eastern and north eastern regions. Graves at Hamangia II/1 (Lazurca 1980, p. 10, pl. I/3;), Kavarna II/1 (Panayotov 1989, p. 133), Pliska XXVI/1 are primary but they are also the only graves in their respective barrows. The only evidence for a chronological attribution comes from Pliska. The vessel from grave XXVI/1 has excellent parallels with the Cernavodă II Culture so that it gives a possible date to the group (Rashev *et al.* forthcoming).

3. Very much contracted hocker graves (oval pits, no pit data). Geographically, they are spread in the eastern and north eastern regions. The pits are always dug into the upper part of the barrow fill. Where they have been recognized, they are oval in shape. Ochre is, in fact, missing. The graves under discussion are connected to the Middle Bronze Age or the Late Bronze Age in the north eastern region. Until now, the graves in the eastern region have been attributed to the Middle Bronze Age only. However, there are some indications that a Late Bronze Age date for at least some of the very much contracted hocker graves is also possible.⁹

Parts of the body buried

Geographically, they are spread in the north eastern region. Two groups can be distinguished:

1. The first group is composed of graves (?) in a rectangular pit covered by a cairn of stones and surrounded by a ring of stones. According to the publications, it was believed that these graves had been robbed in antiquity. Because of the presence of secondary Bronze Age graves situated above two of them (Mihai Bravu, Murighiol), it is quite possible (and this is our opinion) that these earlier graves contained only pieces of bones rather than the usual complete and anatomically connected inhumations. The similarity with some of the Late Usatovo complexes is quite convincing (Dergačev, Manzura 1991, fig.71-72).

2. The second group is composed of accumulations of bones in the upper part of the barrow fills. The lack of grave goods does not allow a precise dating but their stratigraphic position similar to that of the very much contracted hocker graves suggests a similar dating.

Cremation

The ritual occurs in three graves only, all of them in the western region. Their chronological position is well defined in the Coțofeni III Culture or Early Bronze Age, according to the periodization accepted in Bulgarian archaeology (Alexandrov 1994).

CONCLUSIONS

1. The earliest barrow grave between the Danube and the Balkan range is the extended inhumation with a cromlech from Polsko Kosovo. Grave no. 1 from this site could even date before the Cernavodă I period.

2. The Cernavodă I period presents barrow graves with relaxed semi-supine inhumations and relaxed hocker inhumations; in some cases the graves are surrounded by rings of stones.

3. It is quite possible that some of the relaxed hocker inhumations, especially those from the north eastern region, date to the Late Usatovo – Cernavodă III period. The graves with a cairn of stones and rings of stones from Mihai Bravu, Murighiol, Tariverde show a close similarity to the Late Usatovo complexes.

4. The earliest Pit-grave Culture graves in the region date to the Zimnicea-Celei horizon in the Lower Danube or Ezero A in Thrace. Unlike the other regions, the Pit-grave culture between the Danube and

9. Possible LBA barrow graves near Ispirih (north eastern Bulgaria), Stoyanov 1997, p. 111-112.

the Balkan range shows a wide variety of skeleton positions: the typical supine inhumations with flexed legs; contracted hocker inhumations in rectangular pits; a particular kind of extended inhumation. The idea that all three of these different body positions in the grave could be connected to the Pit-grave Culture movements is not a new one for the regions north of the Danube delta. There, some of the contracted hocker graves have been assigned to the so called “Vîinatori-Bolotești” group (Brudiu 2003, p. 54-59; Burtănescu 2002, p. 393-395) and some of the graves with a skeleton in extended position to the so called “Alexandrovka” group (Burtănescu 2002, p. 396). Both of these groups are connected to the movement of the Pit-grave Culture into the Lower Danube region. The nature and mechanism of that movement is still to be investigated.

5. In the EBA 3, in the north eastern and eastern regions, the Pit-grave Culture ritual changes gradually towards a contracted semi-supine position with the possible appearance of graves connected to the Catacomb Culture, where the skeleton is in extended position. The central and western regions preserve the original supine position with flexed legs.

6. During the Middle and Late Bronze Age, barrow graves appear only in the eastern and north eastern regions. These are secondary graves with very much contracted hocker burials or simply accumulation of bones dug into the upper part of the earlier barrow fills.

7. Cremation appears only occasionally in the western region and is to be associated with the local Early Bronze Age Coțofeni Culture.

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TUMULI WITH CIRCULAR DITCH AND THE RITUAL SCENARIO AMONG CORDED WARE CULTURE SOCIETIES ON THE NORTH EUROPEAN PLAIN

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ABSTRACT

In the literature on the subject, the opinion is predominant that the construction of Corded Ware Culture (CWC) tumuli was connected with a single event, namely the burial of a person. The supposition that all actions, including digging a grave, depositing the body, digging a ditch and raising a tumulus, were made during one ceremony is still commonly accepted.

In the last few years, however, in the area under investigation several new finds were unearthed which seem to be contradictory to the opinions mentioned above. This turns our attention to a new more complex explanation. Moreover, we can also use these new finds to reinterpret old data.

In this paper the authors intend to analyze certain Corded Ware Culture graves from the North European Lowland. In the next step, the reconstruction of individual ritual scenarios for each of them will be presented. The analysis shows that a round ditch or a tumulus were often merely individual stages in a long lasting process and a very complex ritual scenario.

In the literature on the subject, the opinion predominates that the building of a tumulus among Corded Ware Culture (CWC) societies was connected with a single event only, namely the burial of a person. The supposition that all actions, that is, digging a grave, laying down a body, digging a ditch, building a wooden palisade and raising a tumulus, were done during one ceremony is still the most popular.¹ From this central premise others follow; to give a single example, the treatment of the discovery of a lone ditch (without the remains of a tumulus) as a result of a post-depositional destruction of the tumulus or explaining the absence of any traces of a palisade in the ditch by its complete post-depositional mineralization.

However, in the last years a few new finds have been reported on the North European Plain, which seem to contradict the opinions mentioned above. They turn our attention to a new and more complex explanation. Moreover, we can use the new finds to reinterpret the old information as well.

In this paper, the authors analyze specific examples of CWC burial sites on the North European Plain, in an attempt to reveal a radically different picture of the sepulchral activity of CWC societies by reconstructing individual ritual sequences (scenarios). The analysis shows that the presence of a circular ditch with a palisade or a tumulus on a site was only one element of a cycle of rituals which took place over a considerable length of time. The very act of burial was, according to such scenarios, only one of the significant episodes.

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1. Machnik 1979, p. 337-338.

TUMULUS (*KURGAN*), DITCH AND PALISADE – SYMBOLISM

Of the symbolism of *kurgan*, a holy mountain by means of which the spirits of the dead may ascend to heaven, we will not speak much here. In this volume a lot is written on this subject.

The *ditch*, however, is another matter, but even in this case its symbolism is quite transparent; it is symbolic of a natural barrier (a river) that often divides the world of the living from that of the dead, especially in Indo-European mythology.² Thus, we deal in this case not with the separating of a sacred space from a regular one but rather with isolating the deceased from the world of the living with a ritual barrier. The ditch, therefore, is a measure to protect the living against the dangerous influences of the dead.³

A *palisade* is another structural element frequently encountered in CWC graves. As a rule, a palisade causes the ditch to go out of use and stratigraphic data show that it is never later than a tumulus, where there is one. Thus, it must have been built at the same time as the *kurgan*. Its construction has, of course, certain practical significance: the presence of a ditch at the time when a *kurgan* is being built is a technical hindrance, whereas a palisade – quite on the contrary – supports the construction. There is no doubt, however, that the emergence of the palisade must have had some deeper reasons. Whereas the ditch defended the living against the evil powers of the dead, the palisade stressed the inaccessibility of the world of the dead to those still living. If this was so, then, between the digging of a ditch and the erection of a palisade, there must have taken place a radical change in the status of the deceased. A dangerous spectre was becoming a distant and happy ancestor.

Let us move to some examples.

Case study: Hijken (Holland)

In Hijken,⁴ we encounter the remains of a *kurgan* encircled by a ditch and traces of a palisade on its bottom (*fig. 1, A*). The space delineated by the ditch is practically all taken up by a grave. This can be interpreted as following the relatively simple ritual scenario: a body was laid in the grave; it was separated from the living with a ditch to isolate the grave itself. Next, after some time, a change in the deceased's status took place, which culminated in the construction of a palisade (a full re-interpretation of the barrier) and the building of a *kurgan* (providing the deceased with a means of communication with the other world).

Case study: Pałecznicza (southern Poland)

Let us move to our second example from Pałecznicza.⁵ Everything is as in Hijken, except for the fact that there is a lot of free space inside the ditch (*fig. 1, B*). This space must have had its significance. Hence, we have time (necessary for transforming the deceased from a dangerous to a good being) and space (a lot of free space inside the circular ditch); the only mystery is what filled the "space-time continuum". We must be dealing here with rituals that took place in the space enclosed by the ditch. They had the form of remembrance but above all they must have been related to the transformation.

The next example may shed more light on this mystery.

2. Kempniński 1993, p. 403.

3. We thank Alex Gibson for the inspiring discussion on the topic.

4. Furholt 2003, p. 225, pl. 202.

5. Włodarczak 2006, table XLIIIA.

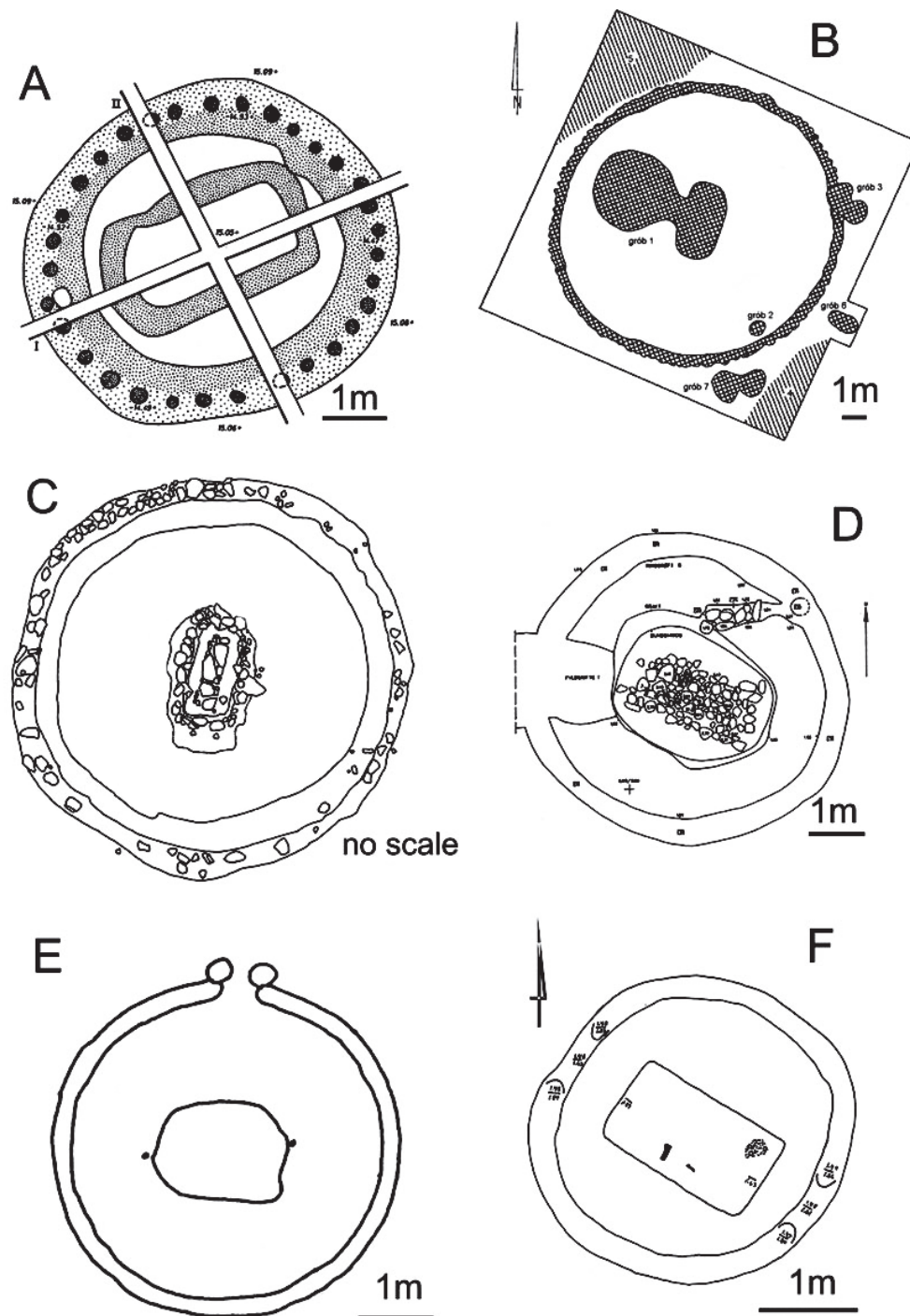


Fig. 1 – A: Hijken, Holland (Furholt 2003, p. 225, pl. 202). B: Pałeczница, southern Poland (Włodarczak 2006, Table XLIIIA). C: Veldbaek, Jutland (Furholt 2003, p. 239, pl. 249). D: Vester Nebel, Jutland (Furholt 2003, p. 240, pl. 250). E: Atting-Ringkamp, southern Germany (Furholt 2003, p. 215, pl. 116). F: Gabøl, Jutland (Furholt 2003, p. 233, pl. 223).

Case study: Veldbaek (Jutland)

The grave in Veldbaek⁶ illustrates another possibility: a timber palisade is replaced by a stone wall (*fig. 1, C*). In this case it may be assumed that substituting one material for another (stone for timber) did not represent any significant change of meaning. A stone wall, likewise a timber palisade, denied the living access to the happy world of the dead who acquired the status of ancestors. In this context, the “entrance” was the tumulus or a “holy mount” closed inside.

Case study: Vester Nebel (Jutland)

In Vester Nebel⁷ there is a break in the ditch – probably an entrance (*fig. 1, D*). Hence, it was possible to overcome the barrier of a ditch for some important ritual reasons. As part of the rituals mentioned earlier, an entry was ceremonially made into the sacred space (*i.e.* dangerous) to leave it in a ritual (*i.e.* safe) way after completing the appropriate rituals.

Case study: Atting-Ringkamp (southern Germany)

The break was at times given prominence by adding other structural elements as can be seen in Atting-Ringkamp.⁸ These were most probably two posts, although it is not entirely impossible that they supported a third one (a lintel), making the whole structure look like a door frame or a gate to another space (*fig. 1, E*).

Case study: Gabøl (Jutland)

The situation may be even more complex as is shown by the example from Gabøl,⁹ where one can see two openings in the ditch lying opposite one another, suggestive of “entrance” and “exit” (*fig. 1, F*). Hence, it can be suggested that whereas Vester Nebel is indicative of a ritual consisting in “entering” the sacred space, Gabøl reveals a ritual of “passing” through the sacred space in some kind of a ceremonial procession. This may imply an entirely different ritual principle, not necessarily referring to the “transformation” of a deceased into an ancestor. The procession passes across individual circles for affirmative rather than apotropaic reasons.

Comment

The structure becoming ever more complex, which is patently shown in the excavation records, does not have to indicate at all the expansion of the same ritual scenario. Quite on the contrary, we can face radically different ritual situations hidden behind similar finds. This is clearly illustrated by the suggested interpretations of the finds from Atting-Ringkamp and Gabøl. However, there are more complex cases with regard to finds as well.

6. Furholt 2003, p. 239, pl. 249.

7. Furholt 2003, p. 240, pl. 250.

8. Furholt 2003, p. 215, pl. 116.

9. Furholt 2003, p. 233, pl. 223.

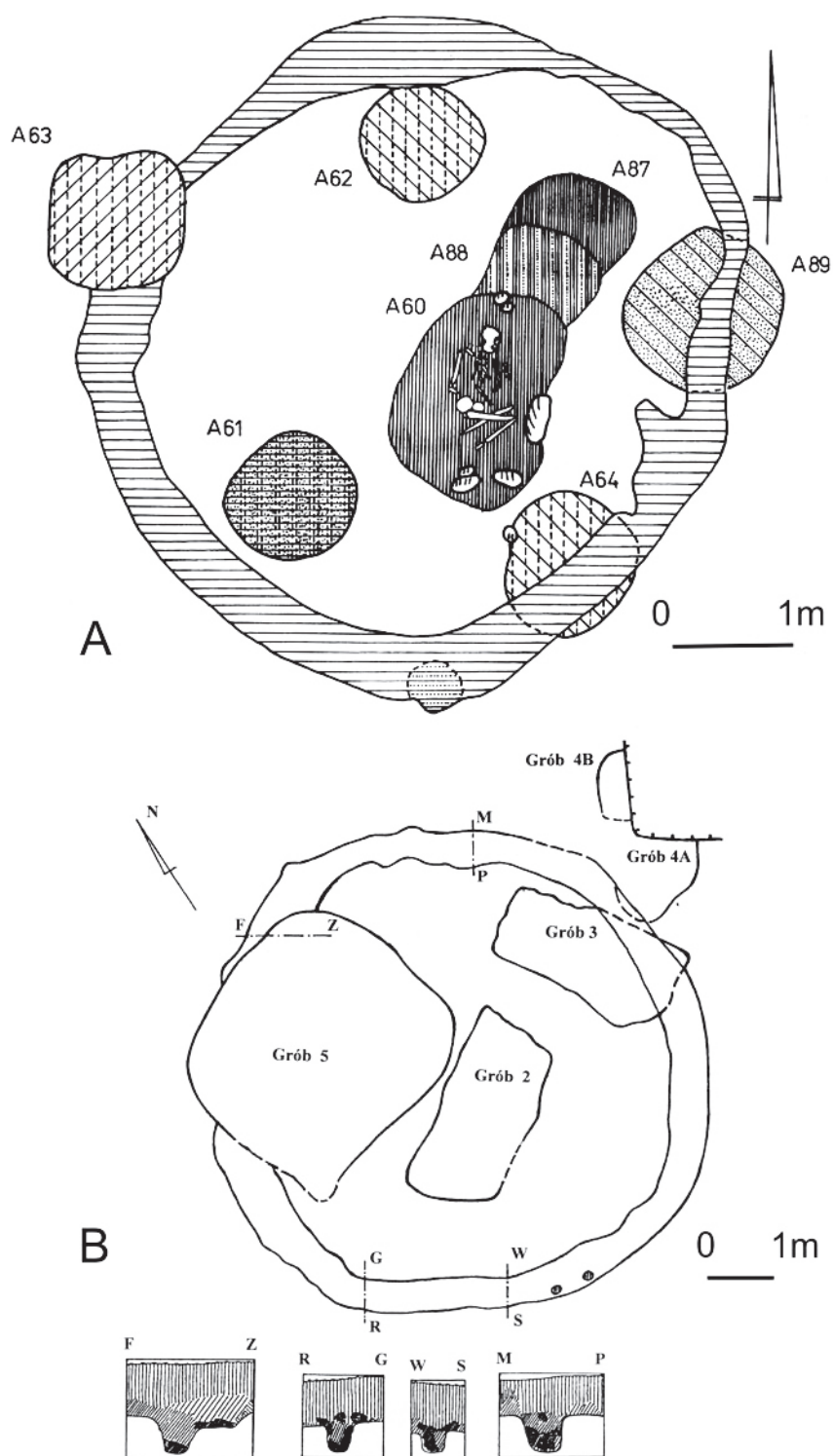


Fig. 2 – A: Ciechrz, Kujawy (Czebreszuk 2000, p. 431-432, fig. 4). B: Prorva, Belarus (Krywalciewicz 2007).

Case study: Ciechrz (Kujawy, central Poland)

Let's move to a grave in Ciechrz.¹⁰ What we deal with here is a number of transformations of a ritual place, with various versions of reconstruction being possible (*fig. 2, A*).

The most plausible versions are as follows:

1. Digging of a grave pit (*fig. 2, A: A60*). The pit walls could have been lined with timber held in place by single stones, including a fragment of a quern;
2. Building of a heavy structure around (and over?) the pit, which could have consisted of either four (*fig. 2, A: A61, A62, A64, A89*) very thick logs or boulders (menhirs?). In both cases, it is possible that the four upright elements supported a kind of a heavy roof;
3. Construction of an "entrance" to the grave pit from the northeast (*fig. 2, A: A87, A88*);
4. Depositing the body of a single adult individual in the grave. The body is crouched on the left side with the head directed towards the entrance (*i.e.* northeast). The grave goods consisted of a partly retouched flint flake and two vessels. Only the flake was found *in situ* (next to the deceased's back);
5. Only after the structure had been destroyed, hence after a long time, a circular ditch was dug of 560cm in diameter. There was no palisade inside. The grave is off-centre, which may indicate that the original structure was so badly damaged that the builders did not know where exactly the grave pit was. This, in turn, may argue rather in favour of a timber structure than its stone alternative. It could have been covered originally with a thin layer of earth. The earth was taken from a place located nearby where a settlement of a Globular Amphora culture population had stood as strata directly above the grave contained numerous pottery fragments of the culture. Once the timber had rotted away, the whole structure collapsed forming a small mound that was later surrounded by a ditch;
6. In Ciechrz, the ditch was not changed into a palisade (soil conditions are good enough in this place to preserve some traces of it). In this situation, therefore, there is no telling whether a *kurgan* was eventually built over the remains of the grave, in the space within the ditch.

This example shows consistent attempts to create a ritual place despite clear problems (for example with identifying earlier rituals actions) following transformations resulting from the lapse of time. However, we personally would not undertake to reconstruct the ritual significance of individual stages. It cannot be excluded, either, that in the hypothetical scenario inscribed in the sequence in Ciechrz, there were phases of discontinuity.

Case study: Prorva (Belarus)

The last example involves an even more complicated scenario in which there are clear breaks calling for some explanation. This is a cemetery of the Middle Dnieper culture at Prorva.¹¹ Its history is long and complicated, from 2500 till 1700 B.C.

In total 22 graves have been explored there, most of them cremations. Quite late in the history of the cemetery, *ca.* 1850 B.C., in its highest place, a grave pit was located which was later surrounded by a circular ditch.¹² In the pit, cremated human remains were laid (of indeterminate age and sex) (*fig. 2, B*). The delineation of "sacred space" by digging a ditch was also an act of introducing a new organization of space to the cemetery, as the hitherto prevailing organization had not entirely reflected the existing order. This is evidenced by the fact that the ditch damaged grave no. 3 (2400-2200 B.C.), which is at least 350 years older. In the space so marked out, a burial was placed (grave 2). The analysis of profile stratigraphy at the site has excluded the existence of any *kurgan*-type mound over grave 2. In the course of its successive use, the cemetery's new organization was yet again invalidated. This was done by constructing grave 5, which disturbed the arrangement with the circular ditch.

10. Czebreszuk 2000, p. 431-432, fig. 4.

11. Krywalciewicz 2007.

12. Krywalciewicz 2007, p. 15-18, table 8.

Therefore, the appearance of a ditch in Prorva comes very late in both absolute and relative chronologies (one of the last stages in the use of the cemetery). This feature shows that the rite of digging a circular ditch was known also in the circle of the CWC, on “flat” cemeteries.¹³ What is more, it does not appear there, contrary to expectations, as a sign creating a new ritual place. Equally important is the fact that the cemetery was used for a very long time, which – when one considers the number of uncovered graves – indicates that a new burial was a rare occurrence. This can mean that traces of earlier graves were obliterated and, consequently, new ones were superimposed on them. Nevertheless, people must have periodically returned to the place.

CONCLUSIONS

In our opinion, there is no doubt that CWC circle societies had an extensive repertoire of ritual scenarios. In Table 1, we have placed side by side two “ideal” sequences of ritual actions of the ones discussed earlier: scenario A – the least complex, and scenario B – the most complex.

It must be stressed, however, that, in their staging, a limited repertoire of actions was used. Among them, apart from the grave pit, there are such elements as digging a circular ditch, building a tumulus, and erecting a circular palisade. There is, however, circumstantial evidence that their ritual meaning was not the same everywhere.

One more comment is appropriate here: can we by any means be certain that all the scenarios were complete or finite? Actually, it is very unlikely that it was so. But even this fact can be used to support our initial contention. Surely, full sequences of such incomplete instances would present to us an even more complex picture.

Scenario A (a <i>kurgan</i> with a single burial forming the whole cemetery)	Scenario B (a <i>kurgan</i> of multiple use being an element of a larger cemetery)
	Older (preceding) ritual activity on the site
Digging and reinforcing the grave pit	Digging and reinforcing the grave pit
Digging a circular ditch (<i>i.e.</i> the division of space into the sacred and the profane)	Digging a circular ditch (<i>i.e.</i> the division of space into the sacred and the profane), sometimes provided with an entrance or an entrance and exit
	Making an entry to the grave
Burying the deceased together with grave goods	Burying the deceased together with grave goods
	Multiple use of the grave: – single burial (replacing older remains with those of the recently deceased) – multiple burial (adding successive bodies)
	Remembrance rituals, libations (as shown by fragments of CWC vessels found “in the tumulus” – this is a frequent piece of information to be found in reports on <i>kurgan</i> excavations), sacrifices (pits containing animal bones or unattached bone finds), processions (to a specific grave: situation of a ditch with an “entrance”) or more complex processions across several circles (situations with an “entrance” and “exit”)
Building a <i>kurgan</i> (closing a cemetery) and surrounding it with a palisade (the final closing of the sacred space)	Burying other dead people in the “sacred circle”
	Building a <i>kurgan</i> (closing a cemetery) and surrounding it with a palisade (the final closing of the sacred space)
	Placing younger graves in the <i>kurgan</i> mound (successive phases of ritual activity on the site)

13. See examples in Bohemia and Moravia, *e.g.* Peška 2004, fig. 4 and 5.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF BURIAL RITES FROM THE TUMULUS TO THE URNFIELD CULTURE IN SOUTHERN CENTRAL EUROPE

Frank FALKENSTEIN*

ABSTRACT

The terms Tumulus culture and Urnfield culture imply a development from inhumations in barrows to cremations in flat grave cemeteries which marks the transition between the Middle and Late Bronze Ages in southern Central Europe. It was the goal of a comprehensive study to investigate this epoch-making cultural change in detail. Important parameters of the investigation are the geographical and chronological distributions of tumulus and flat graves, the dimensions of tumuli, the positions of graves in the barrows and the patterns of primary and secondary burials, the combinations and arrangements of grave goods, as well as the various cremation practices and especially the spread of the urn grave custom. For the analysis by mapping and statistics, more than 3000 burials of the late Tumulus culture (Bronze C, 14th c. B.C.) and the early Urnfield culture (Bronze D, Hallstatt A, 13th-11th c. B.C.) from southern Germany and adjacent areas were encoded to a data base. As a general result it can be shown that the abandonment of tumulus graves in favour of the flat grave custom, the intrusion of incineration and urn rite, and, furthermore, the furnishing of graves with pottery and metal objects represent independent factors of burial practices. Depending on the geographical and chronological contexts the various features are interconnected in manifold ways. The development of burial rites at the transition from the Tumulus to the Urnfield period thus turns out a complex and multicausal process which took place gradually and asynchronously in neighbouring regions. It is suggested that the displacement of the tumulus by the flat grave custom was an inevitable concomitant of the introduction of the cremation practice and triggered by functional reasons. The implementation of the cremation custom and of the urn grave rite should be regarded as chronologically separate processes with different ideological backgrounds.

INTRODUCTION

The terms Tumulus culture and Urnfield culture in southern Central Europe imply a development from inhumation burials in barrows to cremation burials in flat grave cemeteries. This drastic change of burial practices marks at the same time the transition from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age in the general region. It was the goal of a more comprehensive study to investigate this epoch-making cultural change in detail in southern Germany and adjacent areas (Falkenstein 2002). For the analysis, by mapping and statistics, more than 3000 burials of the late Tumulus culture (Bronze C, 14th c. B.C.) and the early Urnfield culture

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(Bronze D to Hallstatt A2, 13th-11th c. B.C.) were encoded to a data base. In this paper, several significant aspects of tumuli, flat graves, inhumation and cremation burials shall be pointed out. In principle all named variants of the burial customs are met with in all periods under consideration. However, the frequency and proportion as well as the combinations of the features in parts shift dramatically.

FROM TUMULUS TO FLAT GRAVE

The diagram (*fig. 1*) illustrates the epoch-making decrease in the frequency of the tumulus custom at the transition from the Tumulus culture to the early Urnfield culture. The practice of burying in flat graves is definitely known in the Middle Bronze Age and in some regions, for instance the northern part of the Upper Rhine valley, it even prevailed. However, the overall dynamic change of grave types takes place during the Bronze D period. At the close of the Middle Bronze Age this new development is yet hardly perceptible but by the beginning of the Hallstatt A1 period the process is virtually completed.

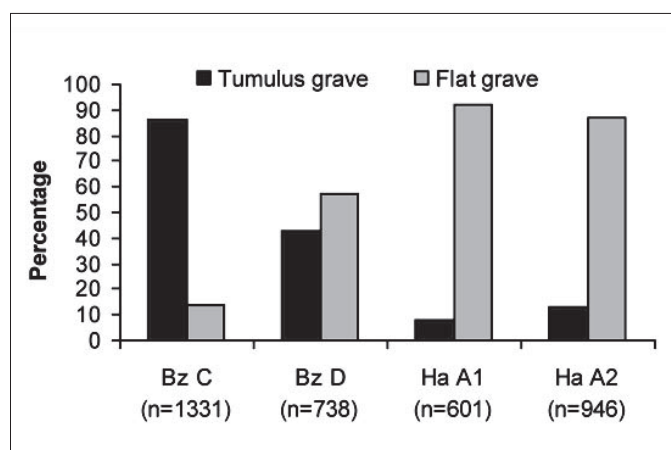


Fig. 1 – Percentages of tumuli and flat graves from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age in southern Central Europe.

regions tumulus burials appear to occur even more frequently by this period, as in the mid Upper Rhine Valley and bordering on the Hagenauer Forest, a landscape that is famous for its expanding tumulus necropolis of the Middle Bronze Age (Area C). Immediately to the north of this micro-region adjoins the northern part of the Upper Rhine valley. Here, the flat grave rite was already practised since the Middle Bronze Age whereas tumulus graves are barely known at all. Likewise, in the area of the river Saar the tumulus custom appears to have been introduced not before the Bronze D period (Area D). In nearly all the regions, which adhere to tumulus burials at this time, the grave custom comprises not only secondary burials in existing mounds from the Middle Bronze Age but also primary graves in tumuli that were newly erected in close proximity to the re-used older ones. This fact indicates that in the 13th c. B.C. (Bronze D) tumulus burial was, on one hand, practised by steadily decreasing groups of population. On the other hand, these minorities still pursued an *active* tumulus rite in that they continued to heap up barrows over primary graves.

Otherwise, the 13th c. B.C. saw an impressive increase in the frequency of the flat grave custom, as illustrated in the distribution map (*fig. 3*). Thus, only a few regions succeeded in resisting this powerful development, such as the ones referred to above (Areas B, C, D) and further, for instance, the mountainous and marginal Fulda-Werra highlands (Area E).

The distribution of the various kinds of burials in the Bronze D period, as seen in the map (*fig. 2*), reveals an altogether patchy picture. In most cultural regions the custom of tumulus graves still continues, but in some regions distinct changes are taking place. In the eastern part of southern Bavaria, in Upper Austria and the Salzburg region the practice of burials in tumuli has come to an end (Area A). At the same time, the occupation of flat grave cemeteries sets in at the Danube, Inn and Salzach and up to the alpine zone of Upper Austria. On the other hand, the neighbouring Riegsee region (Area B) remains entirely unaffected by the process. Further, in some

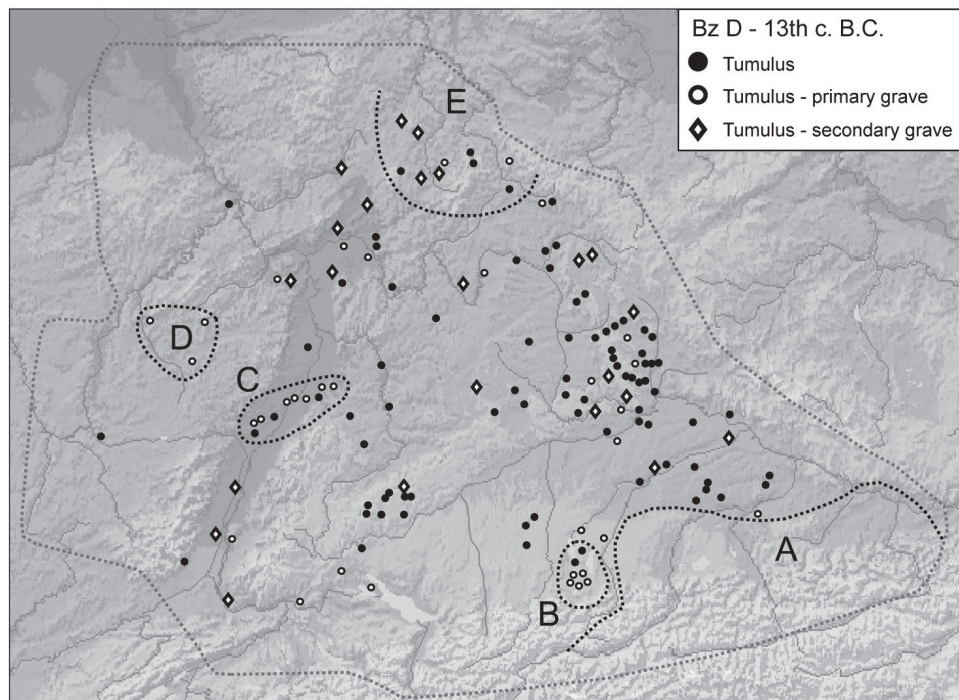


Fig. 2 – Distribution of tumuli of the Bronze D period (13th c. B.C.) in southern Central Europe;
A: Upper Austria, B: Riegsee region, C: upper Rhine valley, D: Saar region, E: Fulda-Werra highlands.

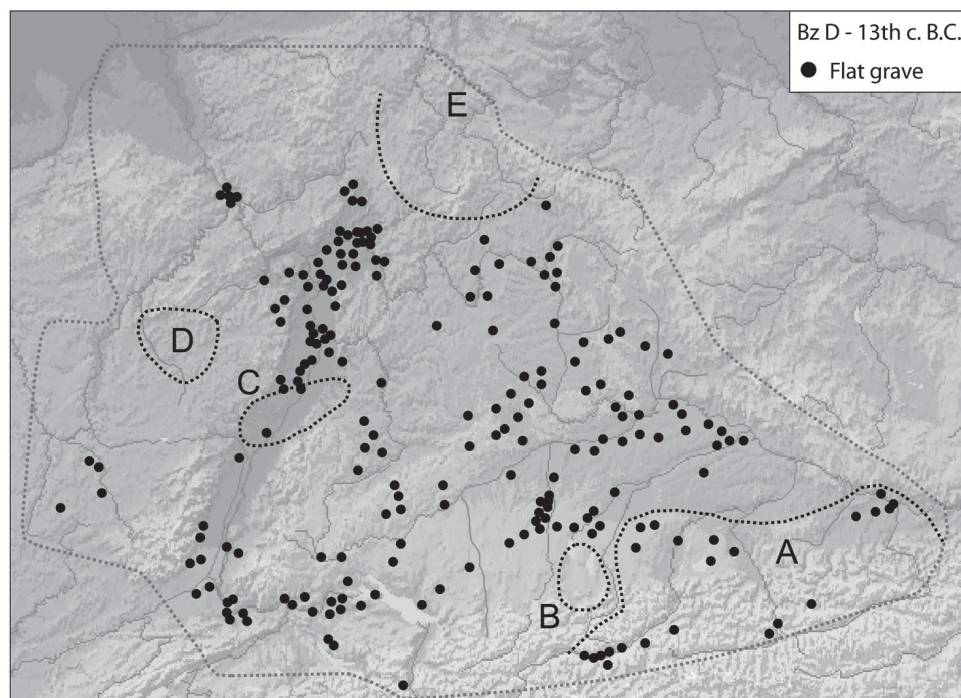


Fig. 3 – Distribution of flat graves of the Bronze D period (13th c. B.C.); A: Upper Austria,
B: Riegsee region, C: upper Rhine valley, D: Saar region, E: Fulda-Werra highlands.

DIMENSIONS OF TUMULI

The most reliable evidence of the original dimensions of tumuli should prove the diameters of the stone circles that were constructed as a boundary at the foot of the mound. In spite of the small numbers of stone circles actually recorded in excavations, the diagram appears to be representative of the statistical norms of diameters, as the bell-shaped distributions indicate (*fig. 4*). A striking observation is the very similar statistical norms of tumuli diameters during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages as in all periods diameters of 7 to 8m are the most frequent. This fact points to special regulations in terms of ritual precepts regarding the building of tumuli. The erection of tumuli thus seems to have followed a long-living convention from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age. Ritual precepts for the construction of tombs possibly allude to two variables: firstly, the number of people involved and, secondly, the time span in which the operation was carried out.

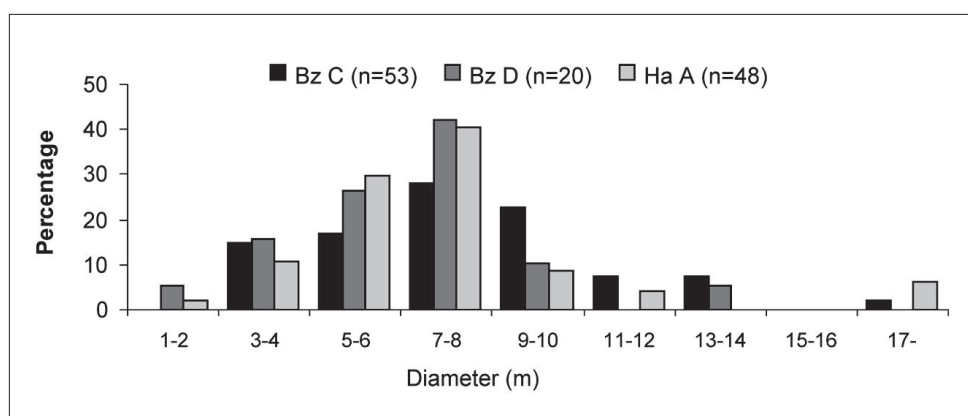


Fig. 4 –Percentages of the diameters of tumuli from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age in southern Central Europe.

The experimental construction of a tumulus with a diameter of 7m using wooden implements required building materials amounting to 21.5 tonnes of soil and 4.5 tonnes of stones, as well as a human labour input of 130 hours (Schulze-Forster, Vorlauf 1989, p. 261 *sq.*). From these data it can be seen that the erection of a tumulus of ordinary dimensions could easily be managed within a few days by a small group of people, for instance a core family or a clan. Given that the Bronze Age society was organized into larger kinship groups there could even have persisted a ritual precept that the heaping up of a barrow had to be accomplished in no more than one day. In that case the size of a tumulus would have depended on the number of mourners involved in the particular interment. Thus, the diameter of the tumulus may indirectly serve as an authentic indicator for estimating the social prestige of the buried person.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY BURIALS IN TUMULI

Graves in tumuli can generally be differentiated into primary and secondary burials. Setting up the primary grave, usually in the centre of a tumulus, gave cause for heaping up the entire barrow. In contrast, secondary burials were dug into the filling of an existing tumulus, thus in a way resembling flat graves, and the beginnings of the flat grave tradition of the Late Bronze Age can consequently be seen as an inherent concept of the tumulus practice.

The diagram (*fig. 5*) shows the alteration of the proportion of primary to secondary burials. Of the two transitions that are obvious, the first comprises the transition from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age and the second marks the border line between the Hallstatt A1 and A2 periods.

Already in the Middle Bronze Age, tumuli appear to have been constructed originally as monuments for single burials (primary graves). However, there were clearly no defined restrictions for the addition of secondary burials into a tumulus. On the contrary, the close spatial relations between primary and later graves indicate that secondary burials were not only tolerated but in fact desired. Tumuli could thus be used over several generations as a burial place and focus of identification of a ritual community, most likely a kinship group. In this context, both men and women could be buried in primary and secondary graves in the tumuli, whereas graves of children are recorded nearly exclusively from secondary burials.

As opposed to the Middle Bronze Age, a new tendency is observed in the Bronze D and Hallstatt A1 periods, namely, the function of the heaped up monument is increasingly restricted to the representation of a single person. Instead of inserting secondary graves in the barrow, the later burials are now rather arranged at the foot of the mound. Finally, by the time of Hallstatt A2, secondary burials in tumuli have nearly disappeared altogether. Thus, despite unchanged dimensions and layout, the tumuli were virtually converted from burying places of a kinship group to funerary monuments of individuals.

A further change in burial practice affects the position of the primary grave in the barrow (*fig. 6*). While secondary burials were at all stages naturally placed in grave pits dug into the filling of the tumulus, primary graves could be set up either on the flattened surface, embedded in the slightly deepened surface, or deposited in pits that were dug about 1m into the ground. Whereas placing the burial onto the surface thus proves to be an inherent feature of primary graves in tumuli of the Middle Bronze Age, the digging of a burial pit into the ground is a characteristic of flat graves. The increase of flat grave burials in the Bronze D period coincided with a more frequent usage of burial pits for primary graves in barrows, which finally prevail in Hallstatt A.

The custom of digging burial pits into the ground thus contradicts the original concept of primary tumulus burial placed on the surface and this means that, in a way, the tumulus grave was discontinued in favour of the concept of the flat grave. This process can, again, be seen as an indicator for the gradual obliteration of the boundaries between tumulus and flat grave, primary and secondary graves.

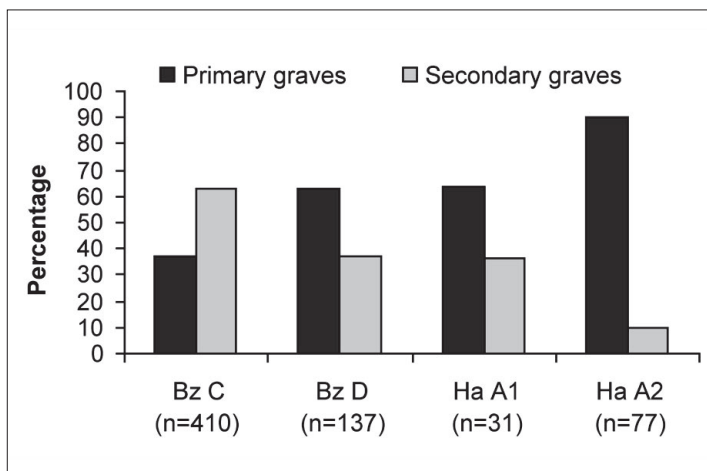


Fig. 5 – Percentages of primary and secondary graves in tumuli from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age.

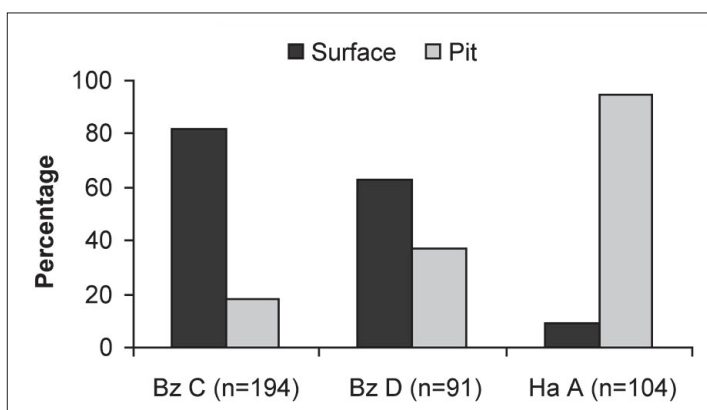


Fig. 6 – Percentages of the position of primary graves in tumuli on the original surface or in pits.

FROM INHUMATION TO CREMATION BURIAL

In the late Tumulus culture a marked proportion of cremation burials is already discernable (*fig. 7*). The final transition from inhumation to cremation burial took place in the 13th c. B.C. (Bronze D), when the proportion shifted nearly to the reverse. From the Hallstatt A1 to A2 periods onward the number of cremations further increased until reaching 100 percent. Clearly divergent from the first appearance of urn burials, the introduction of cremation practice proved to be a process of long duration that was already widely initiated in the Tumulus culture and continued until the Hallstatt A2 period.

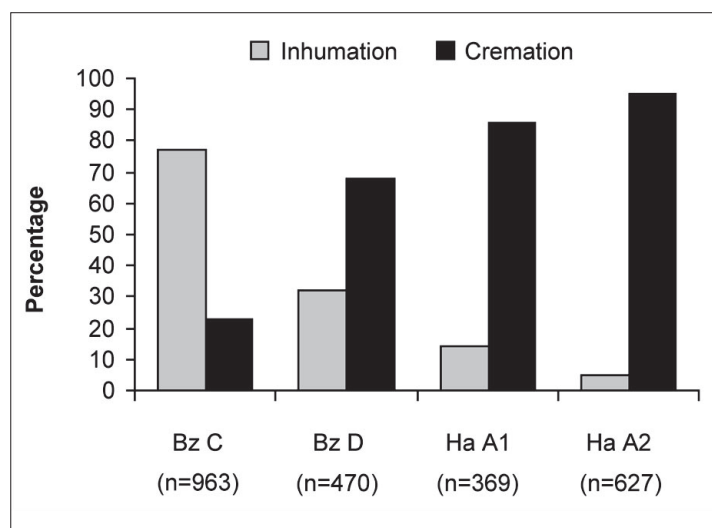


Fig. 7 – Percentages of inhumation and cremation graves from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age.

Inhumation burials of the Middle Bronze Age typically have the dead placed flat on their backs with stretched legs. In terms of their grave goods, men and women are endowed with weapons and ornaments respectively as well as implements and pottery. The combusted or unburned grave goods recorded from the cremation burials of the Late Bronze Age still reflect an unchanged spectrum of functional objects. It appears, therefore, that the ostentatious arrangement of the inhumation practice of the Middle Bronze Age – comprising the laid-out corpse in his/her dressing and the grave goods arranged nearby – was in the Late Bronze Age transferred from the location of the grave to the pyre. Laying the dead either in the grave or on a pyre therefore represented equivalent stages of the inhumation and the cremation rite. The collection of the bone ash from the burnt down pyre and its final deposition in the ground should be conceived as prolongation of the burial rite by means of an innovative element.

As regards the grave goods, an obvious change from the Bronze C to the Bronze D and Hallstatt A periods is, however, the increasing number of pottery vessels in the cremation burials. This circumstance should at least partly be explained tentatively by a twofold donation of pottery, namely a first set of pottery was deposited at the pyre and a second set in the grave.

In the case of the inhumation burials, the spatial arrangement of the pottery in the graves – at the feet, the head or the lateral sides of the buried body – remains statistically very similar from the Tumulus period until the developed Urnfield periods.¹ This observation is consistent with the general fact that in the Urnfield culture inhumation burials were practised by minorities of the population, namely groups who were steadily decreasing but who preserved the traditional inhumation custom in many of its facets over a long period of time.

1. Percentage of pottery placed at the feet: Bz/Br C 49%, Bz/Br D 58%, Ha A 49%; at the lateral sides: Bz/Br C 15%, Bz/Br D 14%, Ha A 11%; at the head: Bz/Br C 36%, Bz/Br D 28%, Ha A 40%.

It is generally presumed that the Bronze Age cremation rite in southern Central Europe had its origin in the Carpathian basin from where it diffused along the Danube corridor to the alpine foreland.² However, in the Bronze Age of southern Central Europe there seems to have prevailed a latent predisposition for the practice of cremation for non-standard burials. As the map (*fig. 8*) indicates, in the late Tumulus culture the cremation rite was already widely spread in almost all regional subgroups. The period-specific type of inhumation rite and the newly spreading cremation rite in the later Middle Bronze Age actually emerge side by side and contemporaneously in tumuli and cemeteries. The specific proportions of cremation burials in cemeteries, however, permit a distinction to be made between characteristic regions. In the alpine foreland, particularly at the Danube and its tributaries and along the upper course of the Rhine, cremation burials obviously prevailed. On the other hand, in the lower mountain ranges like the Swabian Alps, Franconian Alps and the Fulda-Werra highlands inhumation burials were still predominant. In the late Middle Bronze Age the populations settling along the fluvial landscapes of the Danube, the Rhine and perhaps the Main consequently seem to have adopted more willingly the innovation of cremation practice. Populations inhabiting the mountainous areas instead tentatively adhered more strongly to the traditional inhumation rite.

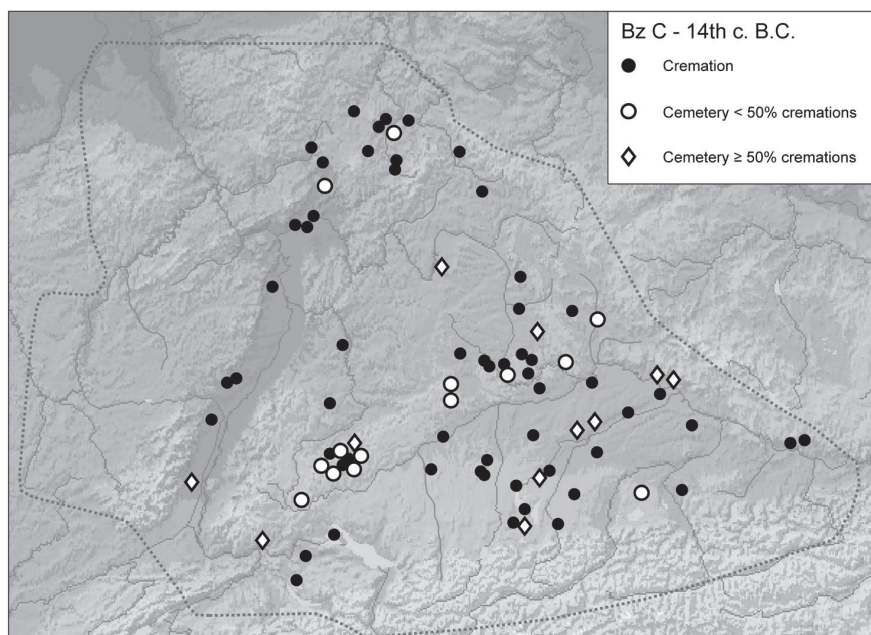


Fig. 8 – Distribution of cremation burials in the Bronze C period in southern Central Europe and percentages of cremations in cemeteries.

Tumulus and cremation burials allegedly constitute opposed and more or less exclusive components of the funerary practice. Cremation burials are, however, attested in tumuli as primary as well as secondary graves while the proportion and relative pattern of cremations change drastically from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age. In the Bronze C period the proportion of cremations is still rather small but ranges significantly higher in secondary than primary graves (*fig. 9*). For this, social or functional reasons could prove responsible. A social aspect would be that the cremation rite was possibly associated with persons of either higher or lower prestige and status than persons buried in the tradition of the inhumation rite. In that case, cremation graves, in comparison with inhumation burials, ought conceivably to display clear differences in terms of the quantity and quality of the grave goods or the variable age and sex of the deceased. However, the statistical data at present do not support any such conclusion. Hence functional and not social causes of the observed disparity appear altogether more plausible.

2. An important site for the diffusion of the cremation rite from the Carpathian basin to the subalpine region is the tumulus necropolis of Pitten in Lower Austria (Hampel *et al.* 1978-1981; Hampel *et al.* 1982-1985; Benkovsky-Pivovarov 1991; Blischke 2002).

A series of experiments have shown that a cremation burial required much more effort in terms of human labour input than was the case with the inhumation practice (Lambot 1994; Leineweber 2001; Becker *et al.* 2005). In order to achieve the complete combustion of a human body a considerable quantity of wood of a special quality had to be provided and stacked to a pyre.³ The amount of human labour connected with a cremation burial can be estimated as roughly comparable with that of building a tumulus. A cremation burial as primary grave in a tumulus thus conceivably meant a reduplication of the manpower required for accomplishing the tomb. Consequently, in the Middle Bronze Age people would, in practice, have made a choice either to conduct an inhumation burial in association with heaping up a barrow, or to arrange for a cremation burial as a secondary grave in an existing tumulus.

In the Bronze D period the proportions of the preferred burial practice had already shifted in favour of the usage of cremation for primary burials in tumuli (fig. 9). However, it has to be kept in mind that at this stage the flat grave custom was still prevalent and tumulus graves were in the minority. The spectacular combustion on a pyre in the Bronze D period certainly implicated continuously increasing value and prestige, as can be seen also from the circumstance that the combined rite requiring duplicated manpower, namely cremation burial as primary grave combined with the heaping up of a barrow, was by now more frequently performed.

Finally, in Hallstatt A the combustion of the dead was considered an obligatory standard rite, and the customs of tumulus or flat grave, primary or secondary burial were then practised independently from cremation.

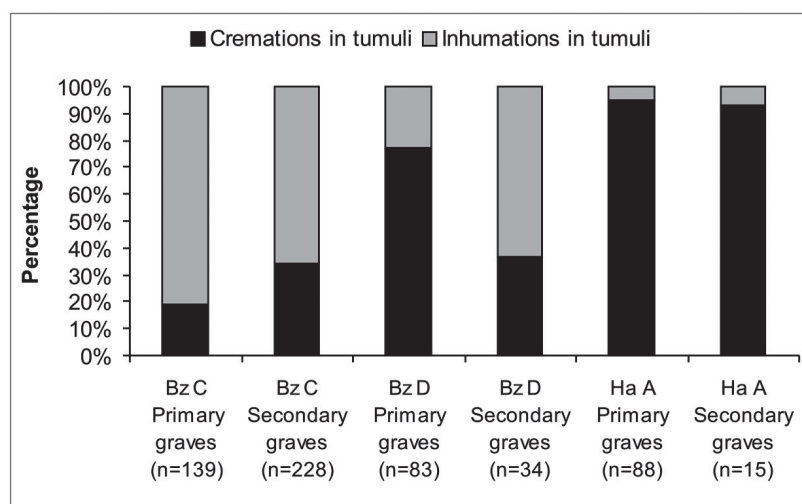


Fig. 9 – Percentages of cremations and inhumations in primary or secondary graves of tumuli.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE URN GRAVE CUSTOM

In the late Tumulus culture and earliest Urnfield culture, cremation burials comprised various types of rites (fig. 10).⁴ The term pyre-grave (*Brandflächengrab*) signifies that the combustion and burial of the dead was performed on the same spot. In general, the burnt down pyre was endowed with some grave goods and then covered by a tumulus. Pyre-graves were typical of the alpine foreland and continued until the Bronze D period. Thereafter this form of cremation grave became extremely rare but survived into

3. Experimental combustion of four pyres by Becker *et al.* (2005, p. 128 *sq.*) required 3.2 to 4.1 cubic metres of wood. This quantity comes up to a one or two years per capita consumption of wood in preindustrial societies.

4. The classifications used in the following are based on the archaeological evidence that is relevant here. There are conformities and differences in relation to the classifications of cremation burials presented by other authors (Kostrzewski 1925; Wilke 1929; Seger 1911-1913; Filip 1966).

the late Urnfield period. Unseparated cremation graves (*Brandschüttungsgräber*) and bone ash graves (*Leichenbrandschüttungen*) emerge side by side and contemporaneously in the same cemeteries. Both types are interconnected by several intermediate forms and therefore appear to represent two variants of a rite that was altogether less specific. In bone ash graves, the separated bone ash was either dispersed in the grave to form a heap or a scatter. Alternatively, and more rarely, in unseparated cremation graves the unsorted remains from the pyre, consisting of bone ash, charcoal and grave goods, were poured into the pit. Finally, urn graves (*Urnengräber*) are here defined as intentional depositions of collected bone ash in pottery vessels that were especially made or selected for this purpose (*ossuarium*). A few genuine urn graves occur already in Bronze C, but this type of burial custom had not become particularly prominent before the end of the Bronze D period. At the beginning of Hallstatt A1 the urn grave rite spread rapidly and superseded the other cremation customs which then became infrequent forms of burial. This process lasted until Hallstatt A2.

As is evident from the map (fig. 11), the earliest distribution of urn graves in the late Tumulus culture was still restricted to the alpine foreland, and the custom by that time yet represented an uncommon, special form of cremation burial. Similar to the cremation rite as such, the urn grave custom was apparently communicated from the region of the western Carpathian basin where it had emerged since the Early

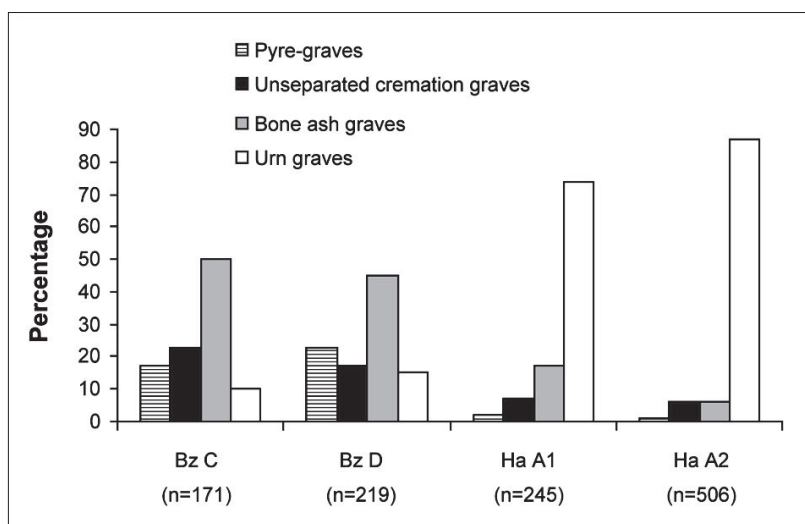


Fig. 10 – Percentages of different types of cremation graves.

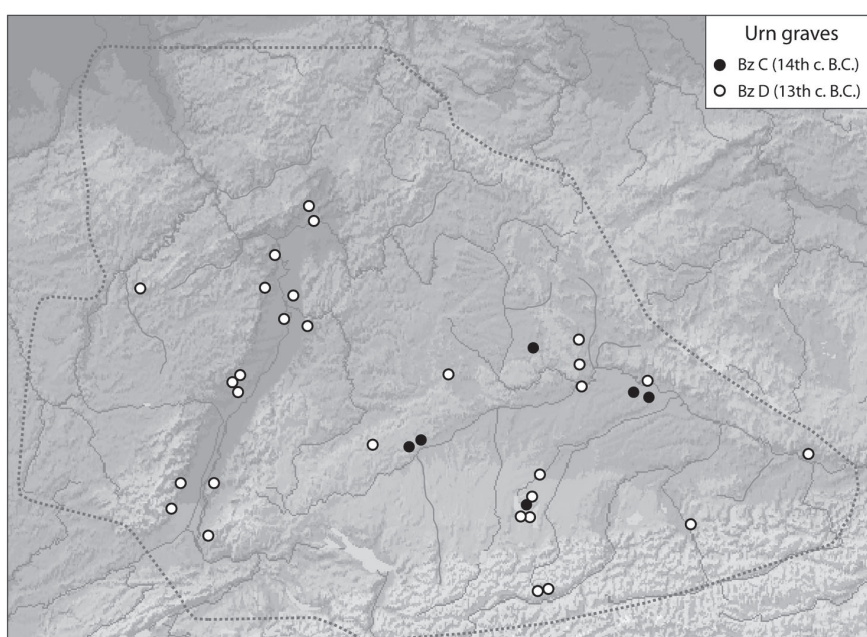


Fig. 11 – Distribution of urn graves of the Bronze C and D periods in southern Central Europe.

Bronze Age (Kalicz 1968, p. 78 *sq.*; Bóna 1960; Bándi 1984, p. 269 *sq.*; Kovács 1984; Furmánek *et al.* 1999, p. 167 *sq.*). In the Bronze D period the urn graves became gradually established in the subalpine region but were still only a minor proportion. At the same time the practice expanded to the west, thus giving rise to a secondary central region of the urn rite in the area of the Upper Rhine valley.

In Hallstatt A1 the urn grave custom spread rapidly over the entire area settled by the so-called Urnfield culture (*fig. 12*). Within a short period during the 12th c. B.C., the urn rite thus experienced a complete breakthrough as the standard burial practice of the Late Bronze Age. Probably in the course of a subsequent colonization process during the Hallstatt A2 period, new urnfield cemeteries were also founded at the peripheries of the regional Urnfield groups.

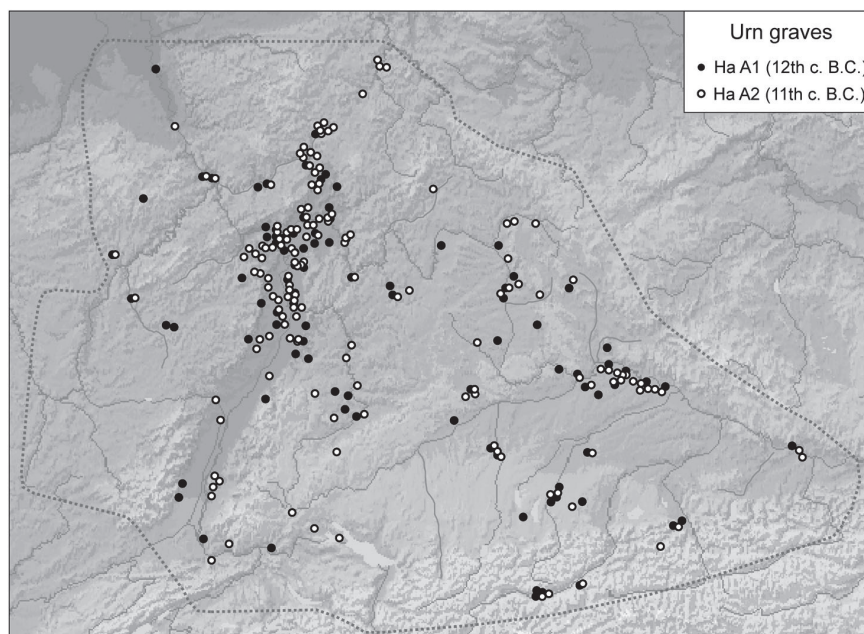


Fig. 12 – Distribution of urn graves of the Hallstatt A1 and A2 periods.

CONCLUSION

Inhumation burials in tumuli and cremation burials in flat graves at first sight appear to reflect opposite concepts of Bronze Age funerary customs. However, the results of the statistical investigation indicate that there was more an indirect and coincidental exclusiveness than a pronounced dichotomy of practices.

In the later Tumulus culture the cremation rite had already diffused into most of the regional groups. The adoption of the cremation practice was a continuous process lasting at least from the 14th c. until the 11th c. B.C., with a marked period of transition in the 13th c.

A crucial point to consider in assessing the significance of the burial types is that the heaping up of a tumulus and the combustion of the dead each required extraordinary efforts in terms of material and human labour input on the part of the mourners, and the combination of both measures consequently demanded a reduplication of the labour invested. Inhumation burial in a tumulus was, on the one hand, less spectacular than the combustion on a pyre but generated a long-lasting visible monument of the deceased. On the other hand the cremation process on a pyre ensured an impressive funerary ceremony but barely left any visual memorial. With the adoption of the cremation rite the focus of the funeral shifted from a material monument to non-material commemoration of the dead, in that the impression of the spectacular combustion was preserved mainly in the memory of the mourners.

During the late Tumulus culture (Bronze C) it appears that people, due to practical necessity, had the choice of either inhumation in a tumulus or, alternatively, cremation as a secondary burial in a tumulus, that is, as a flat grave. Only few persons would, however, have had sufficient prestige and power to have their funeral conducted with a considerably increased labour input by the mourners, namely in the shape of ostentatious cremation *and* the heaping up of a barrow for long-lasting commemoration.

The increasing popularity of the cremation practice in the 13th c. B.C. (Bronze D) had the inevitable secondary effect of the abandonment of the tumulus rite in favour of flat graves. The gradual disappearance of secondary burials in tumuli and the increase of primary graves in pits indicate that the transition from the tumulus to the flat grave custom was a complex process with mutual interrelations. The eclectic combinations of elements of the inhumation and cremation rites that are to be observed in burials, especially of the Bronze D period, point to a gradual change in mental attitude without a dichotomic effect. If by this time the cremation custom was linked to a specific religious concept this must still have been an indistinct ideology. Possibly therefore, the change in mentality concerning funerary behaviour came about in a way that was detached from a determinant religious background.

A different case seems, however, to apply to the adoption and distribution of the urn grave custom. In the 14th c. B.C. this rite was an unusual, special type of interment, and also ranged chronologically after the other kinds of cremation practice. In contrast to the diffuse spread of the cremation rite in general, the inauguration of the urn grave custom appears to have been concentrated on the alpine foreland and the Rhine valley. At the transition from Bronze D to Hallstatt A1 an intensified expansion is discernable. Within a few generations the various cremation rites were then superseded over the entire geographical area adhering to the practice. The large-scale standardization of burial customs only seems possible through strong regimentation due to persisting religious precepts. The diffusion of the cremation practice in general thus paved the way for the concerted implementation of the urn grave custom. As this rite was most probably reinforced by a specific and effective religious idea, we can in the 12th c. B.C. discern a radical paradigmatic shift in religious perceptions.

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NEW WORK AT THE LATE BRONZE AGE TUMULUS CEMETERY OF LĂPUȘ IN ROMANIA

Carol KACSÓ*, Carola METZNER-NEBELSICK**, Louis D. NEBELSICK***

ABSTRACT

The tumulus necropolis of Lăpuș in Northwest Romania has a long history of research. Past excavations revealed a rich record of Late Bronze Age inventories of cremation graves of the 13th to 12th c. B.C., which are so far unique within the contemporary Carpathian basin. Embedded into a river valley at the foot of a mining mountain area, it seems a convincing explanation that the Lăpuș Late Bronze Age community placed their ancestors in a guardian position close to the source of its presumed wealth. The burial rituals in Lăpuș are diverse; not all mounds can be classified as proper graves but rather barrow shaped ritual monuments, one of which, tumulus 26, is presently being excavated by the authors and the preliminary results are being published here. The monument so far has revealed a complex multi-layered occupation with traces of burning, multi-phased pits with various shapes and fillings, hearths and a wooden threshold construction. The pottery assemblage indicates ritual feasting as well as depositions of ritual rubbish. A series of ¹⁴C-dates marks an early beginning of the channelled pottery style, as early as the 13th or even early 14th c. B.C. The series also indicates the use of the monument over roughly 100 years. After the burial activities within the necropolis ceased, a shift of ritual activities to metal depositions can be observed and seen in the context of ancestral worship.

The impressive tumulus necropolis of Lăpuș in northwest Romania is one of the best known Late Bronze Age sites in the eastern Carpathian Basin. This is not only due to the rich and prolific finds and the detailed information about funerary rituals from the excavated tumuli but also because of the fact that the chronological sequence of the cemetery's use is a keystone in defining the initiation of the Late Bronze Age in the Carpathian basin.

GEOGRAPHY AND SETTING

The tumulus cemetery of Lăpuș lies in the eastern part of the Lăpuș river depression or Lăpuș Land (Țara Lăpușului) (*fig. 1*), a widening of the narrow river valley in the piedmont of the Carpathian mountains in the present county of Maramureș in Northern Transylvania.¹ This isolated 30 kilometres long pocket of fertile land lies *ca.* 400m above sea level and is isolated from the neighbouring river valleys by steep ridges severely restricting easy access. Stray finds of stone axes, which date from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic are

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1. Posea 1962; Posea *et al.* 1980.

the earliest evidence for human presence in the Lăpuș river depression. The first traces of settlement activity date to the Middle Bronze Age Wietenberg Culture (dating to the 1st half of the 2nd mill. B.C.). There is massive evidence for an all but contiguous settlement of the Lăpuș river terraces, which is accompanied by bronze deposition sets of the Late Bronze Age (Bz D) and continues until the end of this Period (Ha B). There is as yet no evidence for an Iron Age occupation of the valley and sporadic finds indicate a resumption of settlement in the Roman Imperial Period. It is only in the Middle Ages that there is historical and material evidence for a renewed intensive settlement of this isolated region.²

Of course, it is tempting to relate the occupation of this isolated mountain valley to the mineral wealth of the surrounding Carpathian foothills, which has been the motor of the historic development of the region. In Băiuț, a mining centre, which lies in the narrowing Lăpuș Valley some 15 kilometres northeast of the cemetery site, Medieval and post Medieval mines extracted, among other minerals, copper, gold, silver, lead, nickel and zinc.³ This wide range of minerals is typical for the ore bearing periphery of the Lăpuș valley and the western flanks of the Țibleș mountain massif. It is even possible that small deposits of cassiterite/tin may have been available for early miners. While conclusive proof of prehistoric mining activity in the region still awaits discovery, the vast Lăpuș tumulus cemetery, which is both the wealthiest and largest necropolis and ritual area of 13th c. Transylvania must surely be linked to the exploitation of the mineral bounty of its surroundings.⁴ It is the goal of our ongoing palynology project initiated by Michael Peters of the LMU Munich to clarify the sequences of human impact in both the immediate and wider surroundings of the site.⁵

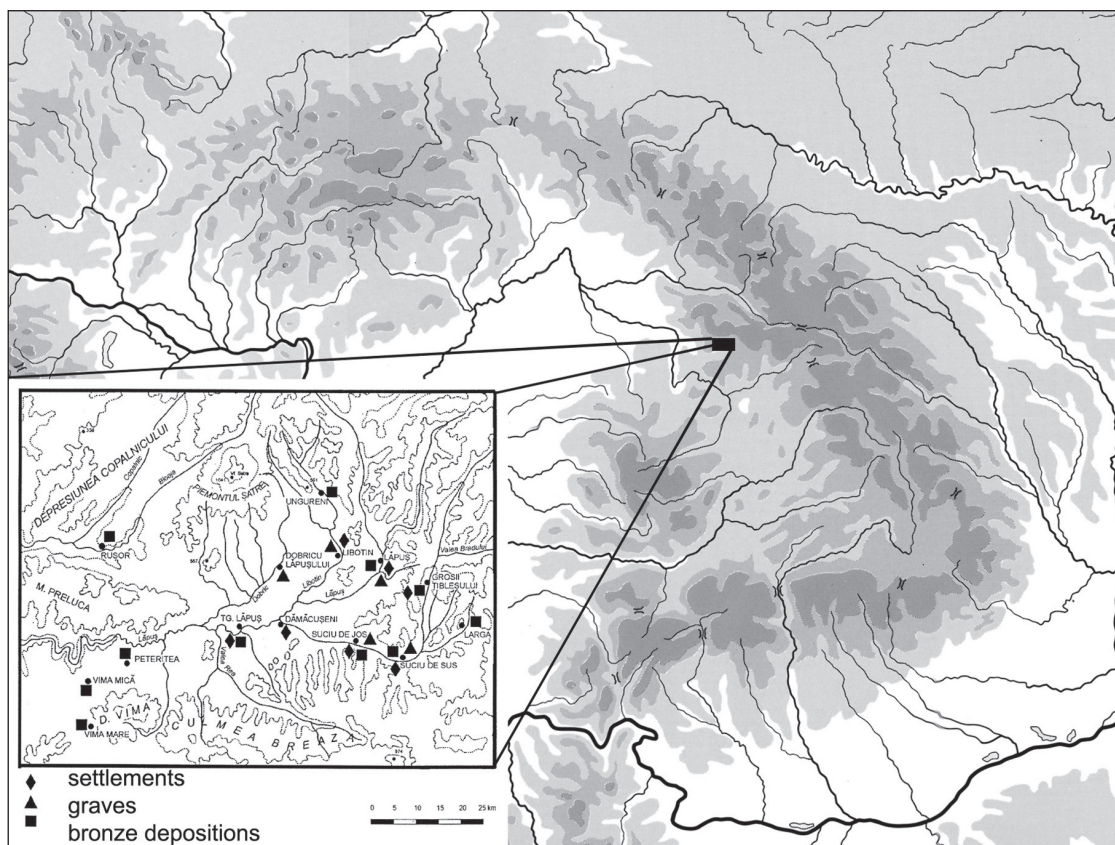


Fig. 1 – Position of the Lăpuș cemetery in the Carpathian basin and map of the Bronze Age sites in the Lăpuș Depression (after Kacsó 2001).

2. Kacsó 2009; for Wietenberg settlement, Kacsó 2003.
3. Borcoș *et al.* 1984.
4. Kacsó 2008.
5. Kacsó, Metzner-Nebelsick 2009. A detailed report of the results of a botanical survey carried out in summer 2008 is in preparation, including the extraction of pollen profiles from ombrogenic peat bogs by M. Peters, LMU Munich.

STRUCTURE OF THE CEMETERY

The cemetery and ritual area, as it is visible today (*fig. 2*), covers a gentle slope rising from the edge of a raised river terrace to the attendant hills south of the Lăpuș valley and southwest of the present village. A long history of intensive agricultural use of the cemetery but also of undocumented treasure hunting excavations has, however, significantly degraded the site. The present situation of the necropolis, according to present observations and historical evidence, encompasses some 70 barrows. This can be seen as a remnant of what must have been a larger and much more monumental funerary complex. Nonetheless it is possible to give a general account of the structure of the site due to a survey carried out in 1967,⁶ which has been enhanced through the ongoing detailed geo-referenced topographical surveys.⁷

Although the survey is not completely finished, we would like to present the following preliminary results. Firstly, we have managed to discover a series of new tumuli, which had previously been unknown. This is due to ploughing, which has reduced most of the smaller barrows to a height of just 40-70cm above the surrounding area, making them difficult to see in the rolling landscape, in which they are embedded. In order to understand the topography of the site, it is necessary to know that the excavated tumuli are numbered in the sequence of their excavation.

The slope rising gently from the steep river terrace to the adjacent southern ridge has been indented by a series of deeply eroded streambeds dividing the area into a series of segregated gently inclined plateaus, on which the different groups of tumuli cluster. The best understood group of the site lies in the field named “Podanc”, a thick cluster (*ca.* 170m x 50m) of 15 small and one large tumulus, lying on the lower plateau with three outliers on the edge of the terrace. Approximately 100m southeast of this funerary complex a further clutch of 15 tumuli (group 3), which includes the newly excavated barrow 26, is focused on a massive yet unexcavated tumulus (100m in diameter and *ca.* 5m in height). Group 2, lies across a steep ravine cut by the Lazar stream on the field “*Podancul Mare*” with ten small barrows clustering around two large tumuli. Peripheral tumulus groups lie *ca.* 200m west on the edge of the river terrace in the field *Podul Hotarului* (group 6). Four tumuli are visible there today but reports from the late 19th c. may indicate that more tumuli in this area (termed group 4) were excavated and destroyed on this site. A second peripheral focus of the cemetery lies on the edge of the steep slopes of the southern ridge *Gura Tinoasei* (group 5 with ten tumuli) and on the adjacent hill top *Mlaca* (group 7 with three barrows), which afford a spectacular view across the valley below. Conversely, anyone entering or leaving the widening Lăpuș valley from or to the prolific mineral regions to the east, will have been confronted with an imposing view of barrow groups clustered around what may have been a 10m high colossal tumulus made of glistening white clay.⁸ This monumental mortuary landscape stretched over a kilometre of terraced slope sweeping up from the edge of the river valley to the summit of the adjacent ridge. If we accept the thesis that the Bronze Age inhabitants of the valley were involved in mining, then it is likely that this awe inspiring demonstration of power and prestige must have been calculated by the leading lineages of the Lăpuș valley to manifest and symbolise their control of the mineral bounty they were exploiting.

6. Kacsó 2001, fig. 3.

7. The map represents the combination of a modern cadastral plan, on which the barrows of a topographical survey, which was carried out in 1967 (Kacsó 2001, fig. 3), are marked, and a modern survey by Michael Kralisch and Ulrich Schultz (Berlin and University Bamberg). Kralisch and Schultz could only execute a preliminary survey in restricted areas, which revealed additional barrows. On fig. 2 they are outlined in different colours but not in the original shape. A survey of the whole cemetery area carried out after the Udine conference in summer 2008 by Mateusz Jaeger and Łukasz Pospieszny from the Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań, Poland, will be published elsewhere.

8. The creamy white clay subsoil in Lăpuș is surprisingly infertile as well as being resistant to erosion. The site of Tumulus 21, for instance, which has stood open for the last 5 years is still barren and can clearly be seen as a white circle on satellite pictures available on Google Earth.

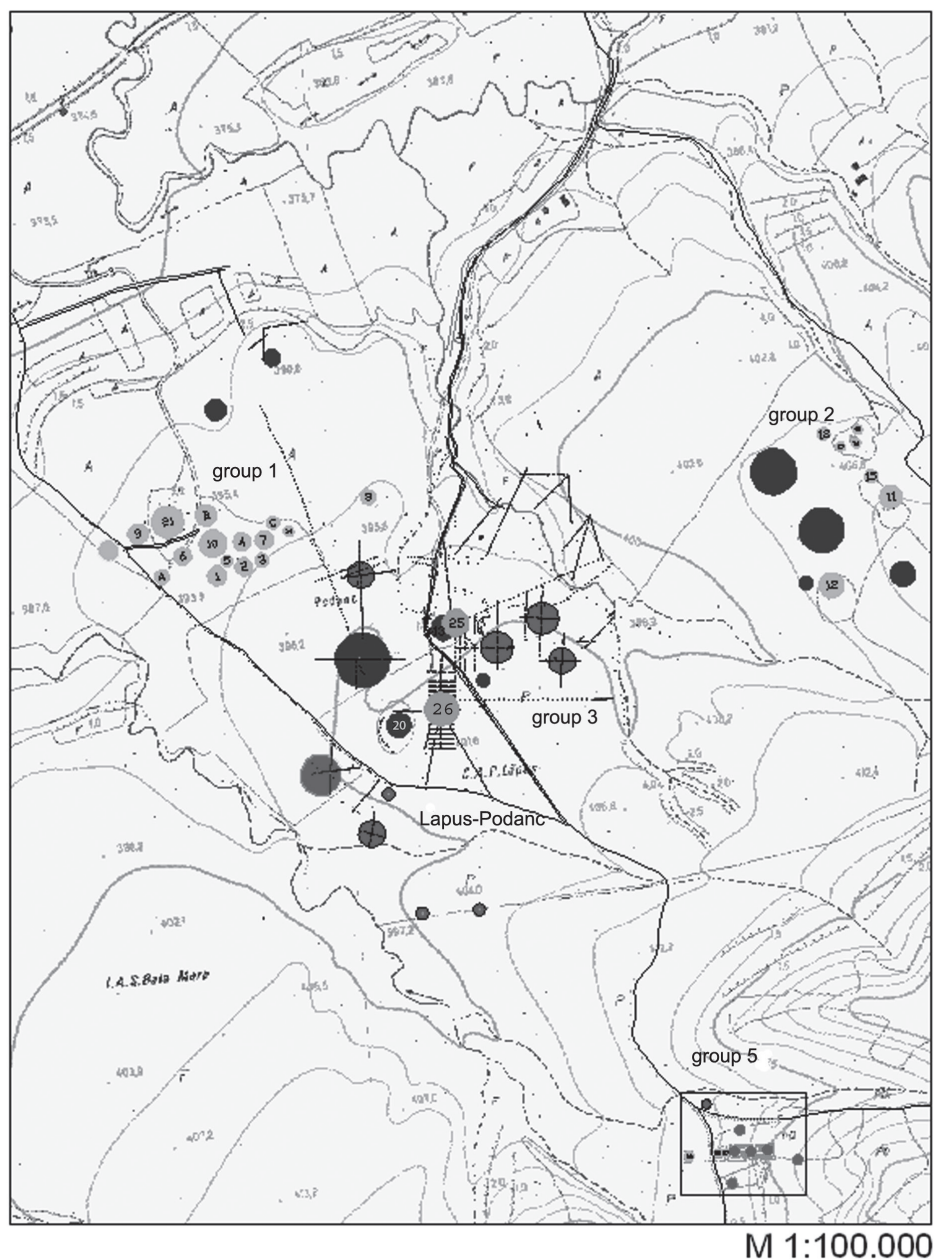


Fig. 2 – Survey plan, made in 1967, of the central section of the Lăpuș necropolis (after Kacsó 2001) supplemented in 2007 by M. Kralisch and U. Schultz.

HISTORY OF RESEARCH IN THE CEMETERY OF LĂPUȘ

The first excavator of the barrow necropolis at Lăpuș was János Szendrei from the National Museum in Budapest. He investigated a series of small tumuli, which lay on a segment of the river terrace known as *Podul Hotarului*. The fate of the finds Szendrei made in Lăpuș is unclear save for one sherd, which he donated to the National Museum in Budapest and still survives in the museum's store. It is a fragment of a high vessel with a globular body, black on the outside and red within with channelled décor and is inventoried under the number (Inv.-Nr. 102. 1890. 7).

It is not precisely clear at which time during the last decades of the 19th c. Domokos Teleki excavated in Lăpuș. The little we know about his activities was recorded by Roska, who wrote that he had recovered cremation graves with Suciul de Sus pottery and a bronze axe.⁹ Unfortunately the pottery Teleki recovered from Lăpuș was later mixed up with pottery he had excavated in Suciul de Sus so that it is impossible to identify it precisely.¹⁰

It was not until 1961 that archaeological activities were resumed in Lăpuș under the direction of Mircea Rusu. On the basis of his excavations of three barrows (Tumuli A-C), which contained channelled bichrome pottery (red inside and black outside) as well as pottery with incised *Kerbschnitt* spiral décor, Rusu assigned the barrow cemetery to the “early Hallstatt period”. In Romanian terms this is equivalent to the early Urnfield Period (Hallstatt A – 12th c. B.C.) in Central Europe. Furthermore he created a “Sântana-Lăpuș-Pecica” culture.¹¹ This lengthy name was coined as a Romanian alternative to the “Gáva-Culture”, which had then recently been introduced for Hungarian material by Amália Mozsolics.¹² Rusu’s classification was accepted by a series of Romanian and foreign scholars and a vessel from tumulus A illustrated a number of articles about the Gáva Culture.¹³

Excavations resumed at Lăpuș between 1967 and 1974 under the direction of Carol Kacsó resulting in the excavation of 20 further tumuli (nos. 1-20) lying in the fields *Podanc* and *Podancu Mare* (groups 1-3). Ivan Ordentlich was also involved in these excavations during the 1961, 1967 and 1968 campaigns. These excavations resulted in the discovery of a wealth of finds including an enormous amount of pottery but also metal objects made of bronze gold and iron as well as bone, stone and clay artefacts. Furthermore, many details pertaining to burial practices and attendant ritual were recorded. Lastly, these new excavations revealed information, which made it possible to reach conclusions about the chronological and cultural classification of the cemetery, which were clearly different from those reached by previous scholars.¹⁴ A comprehensive preliminary report about this campaign was published 1975.¹⁵ Furthermore investigations were carried out on a nearby site, which is related to the use of the cemetery¹⁶ and in 1967 a topographical plan was made of all the visible tumuli in the necropolis.¹⁷

A new campaign in Lăpuș, which commenced in 1995 was also directed by Kacsó. This involved the complete excavation of monumental tumulus 21 between 1995 and 2004. This mound, which is one of the largest in the necropolis, had an impressive mound like structure in its centre, made up of boulders, stones and stone slabs, which were surrounded by a stone ring and contained remains of at least two pyres.¹⁸ Between 2004 and 2006 three small tumuli (nos. 22-24) were excavated in a newly discovered tumulus group (group 5) lying about 400m south of the main barrow cemetery. In one of these tumuli (no. 22) vessels were found, which belong to the latest phase of the cemetery’s use.¹⁹ In the years 2007-2008 excavations commenced under the direction of Carola Metzner-Nebelsick and Carol Kacsó in the context of a cooperation project between the Maramureș County Museum in Baia Mare, the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich and Louis Nebelsick of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.²⁰ A larger part of tumulus 26 was excavated.

9. Roska 1940, p. 11; Roska 1942, p. 209, no. 23.

10. Bader 1976, p. 45 sq.

11. Rusu 1963, p. 189; Rusu 1969, p. 677 sq.

12. Mozsolics 1957, p. 120 sq.

13. Zaharia 1965, p. 103; Zaharia, Morintz 1965, p. 454; Horedt 1966, p. 18; Horedt 1967a, p. 151; Horedt 1967b, p. 151; Foltiny 1968, p. 340, fig. 3, 6; Paulík 1968, fig. 1 (distribution map of the culture); László 1973, p. 586, fig. 2, 4.

14. Kacsó 1981a; Kacsó 2001, p. 231 sq.

15. Kacsó 1975.

16. Kacsó 1994.

17. Kacsó 2001, fig. 3.

18. Kacsó 2000, p. 37; Kacsó 2001, p. 236 sq.

19. Kacsó 2009.

20. Kacsó, Metzner-Nebelsick 2008, p. 177 sq.; Kacsó, Metzner-Nebelsick 2009.

FINDS AND CONTEXTS

It is also worth mentioning that late bronze deposits and hoards have been found in the environs of the necropolis. The first recorded find, *ca.* 30 bronzes, including among other things celts, sickles rings and at least one sword, was found lying on the south eastern periphery of the necropolis by a farmer.²¹ A second hoard on the eastern edge of the cemetery was composed of *ca.* 40 bronzes including socketed celts a sword, bronze vessel fragments and casting remains.²² Additionally single finds such as a celt, an axe and a Late Bronze Age sword have been recovered in the surroundings of the necropolis during the last few decades.²³

From the excavated material and its contexts it must be concluded that the cemetery of Lăpuș, which has been traditionally dated to the 13th to 12th c. B.C., is an outstanding site, as its barrows have produced a selection of artefacts hitherto unknown from any other contemporary burial site. Different pottery styles could be distinguished: the first is a rich curvilinear style in incised *Kerbschnitt* manner, which occurs on bowls. It has parallels in the Suci de Sus pottery style, which has been traditionally dated to the middle Bronze age in central European terms (Bz B1-Bz D)²⁴ and whose type site, a cemetery, is located in the neighbouring valley *ca.* 5 kilometres east of Lăpuș. Inventories of these heavily decorated bowls were used by Carol Kacsó to define the first phase of the cemetery's use.²⁵

This décor also occurs on large high necked vessels which are decorated with, among other things, figurative motifs like animal head protomes and incised friezes with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic décor combined with symbolic motifs such as the target design (solar symbol?) which only become an integral part of east central European art in the Hallstatt period.²⁶ A second style is represented by channelled ware and is associated with huge high necked vessels with black exteriors and red inside surfaces but also with many other smaller forms in the assemblage. These vessels are similar to the so-called late Bronze Age Gáva-style pottery whose inception is usually dated to the 12th c. B.C.²⁷ Lastly channelled vessels with a developed character, which correspond to the late Gáva style mark a more developed phase of the Lăpuș channelled ware. Kacsó has used this stylistic differentiation as the basis of a chronological sequence seeing an initial Lăpuș 1 phase as being characterized by incised pottery, channelled ware introduced in Lăpuș 2 and developed channelled pottery in Lăpuș 3.²⁸

Metal finds from tumuli with incised and channelled ware include weapons (daggers and, at times, miniature axes), tools (celts, chisels and stone casting moulds), dress accessories (pins and early fibulae), bun ingots and gold and tin beads dating to Bz D and Ha A represent the richest grave good assemblages in the contemporary eastern Carpathian region. A socketed axe is among the earliest iron artefacts in Southeast Europe.²⁹

The funerary practices in the cemetery are surprisingly varied. There are barrows with cremations in urns, as well as in the form of scattered cremations. A third kind of barrow did not reveal any evidence of human burials but instead contained profuse amounts of burnt animal bones, large quantities of fragmented and/or refired pottery and casting remains. Structural evidence includes stratified sequences of construction, burning and mound building including large pits set out in symmetrical rows and depositions of burnt wattle and daub structures.

21. Kacsó 1981b.

22. Kacsó 2002.

23. Kacsó 1994; Kacsó 2004.

24. Bader 1976; Bader 1979; Kacsó 1999.

25. Kacsó 1971; Kacsó 1975; Kacsó 2004.

26. Kacsó 1975; Kacsó 2001; Kacsó 2004; for the interpretation see also Teržan 2006.

27. For illustrations see: Kacsó 1975; Kacsó 2001; Kacsó 2004; for the dating of the Gáva Culture in general also: Szabó 1996; Szabó 2004; Pare 1999; Pankau 2004, p. 2. For Szabó (2004, p. 99) Gáva starts with HaA1 in the eastern Hungarian Plain, earlier ensembles of similar style dating to the 13th c. B.C. are called "Pre-Gáva" in his terminology.

28. Kacsó 1971; Kacsó 1975.

29. Kacsó 2001, p. 276, fig. 26, barrow 1.

The current Romanian, German and Polish research project in Lăpuș has several tasks which we would like to highlight only as far as the excavation of barrow 26 is concerned. Although the excavation record of Lăpuș has been quite substantial there were still a lot of open questions needing an answer. A primary goal is to address the crucial question of absolute chronology. On the one hand this will help us to understand the sequence of cemetery use but also the chronological position of the dynamic cultural development in this exceptional cemetery and attendant ritual area in comparison to the sequences of change and acculturation in contexts from surrounding regions. This is particularly interesting as both the absolute chronology and the cultural dynamics of the radical changes, which mark the advent of the late Bronze Age, still await an adequate description. Furthermore, the sequence of change in Lăpuș mirrors and may even prefigure the radical break from the regionally focussed pottery traditions and adoption of the supra regional channelled pottery styles, which mark the integration of the eastern Carpathian basin into the economic, ritual and stylistic *koine* of the emerging Pan-European Urnfield culture. We also hoped that with the help of high precision dating, as well as pedological and botanical analyses new light could be shed on the complex construction and deposition sequences which are a hallmark of the tumulus constructions in Lăpuș.

Tumulus 26, which has become the focus of our excavations, was originally constructed on a slight elevation of the natural subsoil and is now a somewhat oval structure between 35 and 40m in diameter. It has been ploughed down to a height of 60-70cm above its surroundings. During our initial test excavation we decided to open three trenches extending from the centre of the mound to a field road and accompanying drainage ditch at its base. The ditch had already cut into the periphery of the barrow and revealed a peripheral stone structure. In the years 2007 and 2008 we have managed to excavate about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the barrow and despite the fact that our latest campaign took place after the Udine conference we would like to present a summary of our latest results here. Instead of discovering a straight forward burial monument it is clear that barrow 26 is instead a highly complex ceremonial monument. Initially, a low flat mound was erected on a natural hummock on a plateau on the eastern edge of tumulus group 3. A SSW-NNE aligned double threshold construction on the western edge of the tumulus, which we believe was made up of foundation beams (*fig. 3*), separates two very different zones of activity and deposition in this monument. In the interior a complex sequence of construction, destruction and mound building was recorded leaving us a laminated profile very much reminiscent of a tell construction. While we still need further analyses and excavation in order fully to understand the sequence, a clear pattern of use emerges, involving central hearth-like burnt areas, which show signs of renewal, parallel linear posthole and pit alignments, which run parallel to the threshold, and multiple destruction and mound building phases, which include deposition of burnt matter, burnt daub as well as cobbling. Obviously a series of symmetrically constructed SSE-NNW oriented wooden/wattle and daub structures were erected and burnt down on the central platform of this barrow before it was sealed in a last phase of mound building. It is worth stressing that the calcinated bones found



Fig. 3 – Photograph of the threshold construction in barrow 26.

and analyzed so far belong entirely to animals. In a late phase of construction large pits (up to 2.5m wide and some over 1 metre deep) were cut into the mound's surface and filled with burnt organic matter daub and pottery. The largest and most complex of these pits in the centre of the barrow is one of the most striking features on the site so far. The pit, which was re-cut after a period of infilling, was finally sealed with large fragments of a large red and black channelled vessel. Its laminated filling included only very few sherds as well as calcinated animal bones including remains of a stag. It was the abundant charcoal from this pit which was the primary focus of ^{14}C -probing (see below).

Interestingly the wooden threshold construction separates this central platform from a periphery, which shows evidence for a startlingly different kind of ritual activity. A heaped sherd packing made up of intentionally destroyed vessels stretches at least 3 metres from the edge of the threshold towards the periphery of the tumulus. Rims and handles were found in the upper part of this packing and bases appeared in the lower levels. This indicates that the vessels were smashed or crushed at the spot. The assemblage in this pottery deposit at first sight seems to be dominated by cups, the majority of which were not refired. This fact stands in sharp contrast to the condition and composition of the pottery deposited in large pits which were found next to the sherd concentration and closer to the periphery of the barrow. Here larger fragments of intentionally destroyed refired vessels, many of which belong to high necked vessels with channelled décor, which typify the Lăpuș 2 phase, were found with other burnt remains. Burnt wattle, still showing the impressions of wood, was found while pieces of slag and charcoal complete the inventory of these pits. Finally a 2.5 metre wide cobbled pavement leading to a gap in the threshold was found in this peripheral region perhaps indicating a monumentalised entrance or *dromos* like feature. Clearly the ritual process on this mound, which is best seen in terms of a sanctuary, involves rituals, in which burning organic matter, such as pottery but also animal remains, played a large role. The intensive use of vessels in this and other tumuli, point to libation and/or feasting ceremonies as likely ritual contexts for the activities in and around the mound. Finally the accumulation of vast amounts of ritual rubbish poured into pits and heaped on the periphery of the mound indicate that these rituals were intensive and repetitive. Indeed this evidence for repeated destruction and re-erection of structures on the central platform makes it likely that cycles of renewal were an integral part of the ritual process in this sanctuary (*fig. 4*), which seems to have been in use for at least four generations. Kacsó's investigation of the other mounds in groups 2 and 3 show strikingly similar patterns of symmetrical constructions and pottery deposition,³⁰ so that barrow 26 must be seen as conforming to a standardized pattern of monument building in the Lăpuș necropolis.



Fig. 4 – Panoramic view of an east-west section of barrow 26 during excavations in 2008.

30. Publication in preparation.

Considering the integration of this structure into a necropolis, ritual feasting in the context of funerary ritual and/or ancestor worship would, of course, be a highly likely explanation for the use pattern seen in this monument. Interestingly, evidence for broadly contemporary and analogous ritual activity has been discovered in other locations in Romania, which show a wider context for material intensive feasting and deposition. The well known barrow like structure of Susani in the Banat excavated by Ion Stratan and Alexandru Vulpe³¹ revealed pottery masses with a clear dominance of bowls, cups and burnt material, among which a large deposition of burnt grain is remarkable, but no obvious evidence of a funerary context. At the site of Meri in Muntenia, discovered by Emil Moscalu, a different structure under a barrow shaped mound was uncovered. It contained several fire places in a central position in the mound, accompanied by pottery depositions.³² There are also sites, such as those found on the edge of the Bistreț lake in Oltenia, excavated by Ion Motzoi-Chicideanu,³³ or Carol Kacsó's excavation in Libotin,³⁴ in the Lăpuș valley, which show similar depositions but without tumulus-like coverings in what looks more like settlement contexts.

Perhaps the Late Bronze Age communities of Lăpuș were adapting broader based contemporary ritual practices to the commemoration of their dead. It is also worth recalling that monumental Late Bronze Age tumuli from the western Carpathian Basin such as Čaka in western Slovakia also betray evidence of analogous ritual complexity: in the latter example of the well known corselet grave, the tumulus covered a central platform with evidence of intensive burning. Depositions of metal and pottery depositions, here however together with burnt human bones, were recorded in ancillary pits and the body of the tumulus itself revealed a multiphase construction.³⁵

Besides a handful of sherds from different contexts with incised décor the pottery assemblage from tumulus 26 is typical for the Lăpuș 2 channelled ware of the cemetery and characteristic for all the similarly constructed ceremonial barrows excavated on the site so far (*fig. 5*). The barrow's pottery included large conical necked vessels with faceted rims, conical shoulder protomes and channelled spiral décor, barrel shaped pots with brush stroke roughened surfaces, wide bowls with faceted rims, a wide range of jugs and delicately fashioned burnished cups with vertical, horizontal and diagonal channelling, many with button tipped oval handles as well as pyranoi (portable hearths) with wide band shaped feet.

Due to the prolific preservation of burnt wood in tumulus 26 we were able to take a series of charcoal samples for AMS ¹⁴C-dating. Thirteen samples have been dated so far thanks to the analyses by Tomasz Goslar from the ¹⁴C-laboratory of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (*fig. 6*).³⁶ This is the largest contiguous sequence of dates from a Late Bronze Age site in the eastern Carpathian basin analyzed and published so far. A final interpretation of the data and their context cannot be published here in detail due to the limited space of this article. We will therefore only mention a few facts. The dated samples were mainly taken from a large multi-phase pit complex 66/74/87 in the centre of the barrow: 6 dates were analyzed within the 2 sigma standard variation with a probability of 95.4%: 1. P14, complex 66: post in the upper layer: interval of 1380-1120 B.C.; 2. P23: highest layer of pit: interval of 1380-1120 cal. B.C.; 3. P30: middle of the pit: 1630-1450 cal. B.C.; 4. P31: 1540-1410 cal. B.C. (lower part of the pit); 5. P36: 1460-1290 cal. B.C. (lowest level); 6. P38 (complex 87 at the very bottom of the pit complex, unfortunately without pottery associations): 1420-1250 cal. B.C. Disregarding the two samples in the middle of the pit, which may reflect an old-wood-effect, the data offer a picture matching roughly the stratigraphy of the pit: If we look in comparison at the 1 sigma standard variation with 68.2% probability the dates are the following for Pit 66/74/87: 1. P14, complex 66: 1310-1190 cal. B.C., coming stratigraphically from the latest feature and also being the youngest date, followed by 2. P23: highest layer: interval of 1320-1200 cal. B.C.; 3. P30: 1610-1490 cal. B.C.; 4. P31: 1515-1440 cal. B.C. (lower part of the pit) almost identical to 1 sigma; 5. P36: 1440-1370 cal. B.C. (lowest level) 55.8%; 6. P 38: 1390-1290 cal. B.C. (lowest level) 67.1%.

31. Stratan, Vulpe 1977.

32. Moscalu 1976, especially fig. 1.

33. Motzoi-Chicideanu 2001.

34. Kacsó 1990.

35. Točík, Paulík 1960.

36. A detailed report of the dates is in preparation.

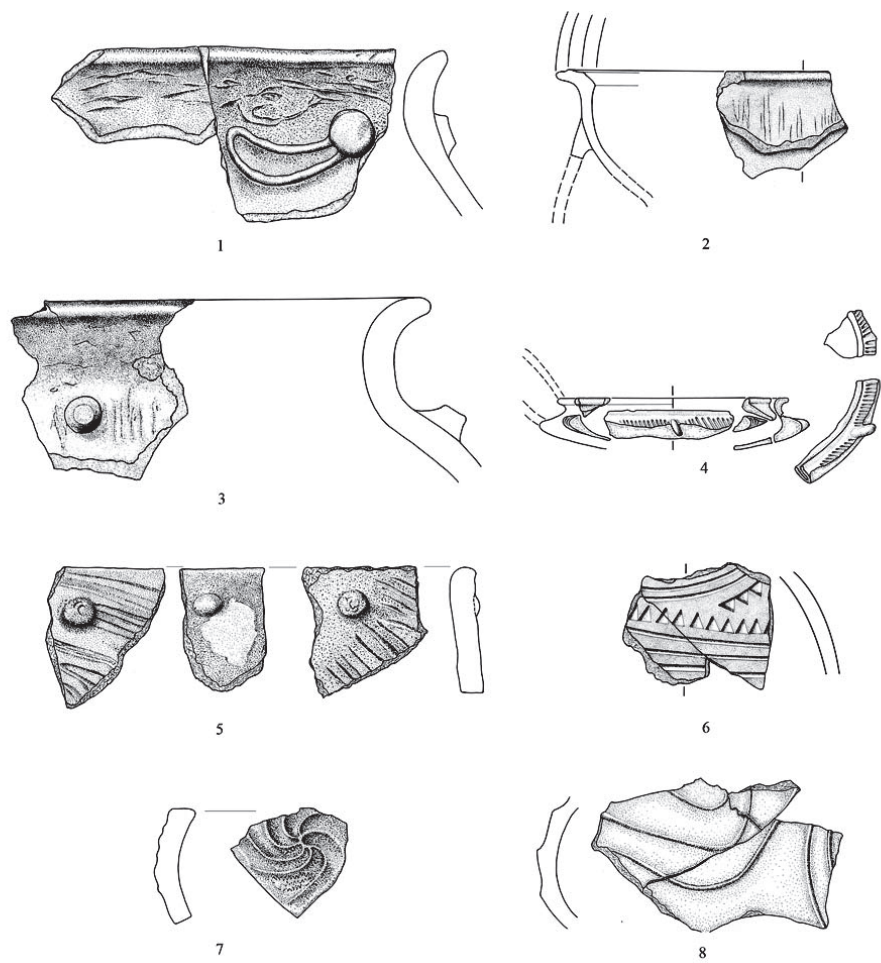


Fig. 5 – Selection of pottery fragments from the excavations in tumulus 26 in 2007/2008 (scale 1:3, drawings by B. Köhler).

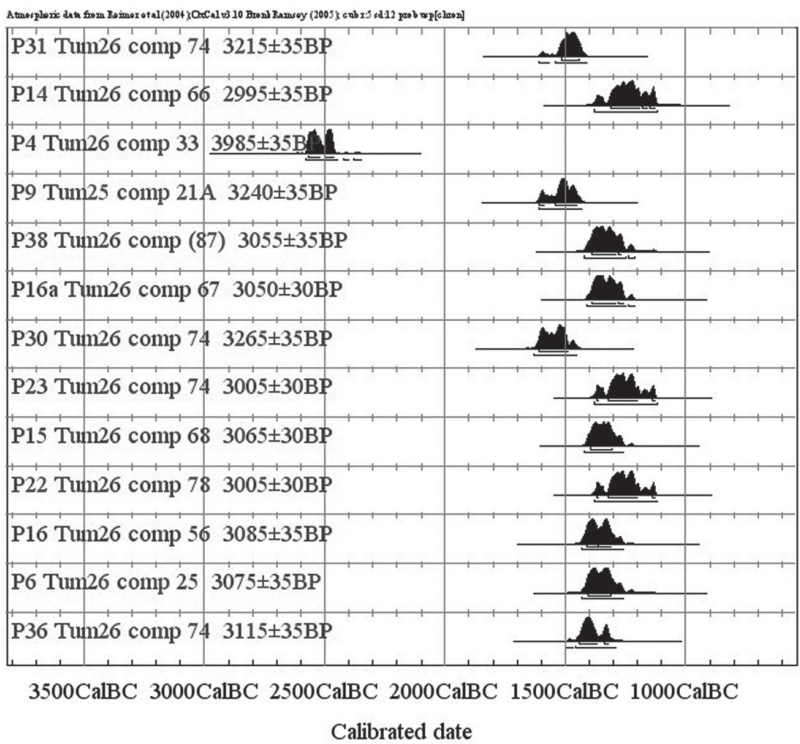


Fig. 6 – Graphic representation of the ¹⁴C dates from barrow 26 by Tomasz Goslar (¹⁴C Laboratory University of Poznań).

Except for those from the upper level of the pit complex 66/74/87 all dates are older than the 13th c. B.C.! The latest level of occupation/activity, including the burnt posts, dates to the 13th c. or beginning of the 12th c. B.C. (in the 1 sigma variation, also likely in the 2 sigma range). From the other dates from various complexes of the mound a similar picture emerges: these dates indicate building activities at the barrow in the 14th and beginning of the 13th c. B.C.

Summing up, we can conclude that the emergence of channelled pottery in Lăpuș can be dated perhaps as early as the late 14th and clearly to the early 13th c. B.C., which is roughly around one hundred years earlier than previous scholarship had assumed. While the fact that the samples are derived from charcoal might be seen as a cautionary factor in accepting such a high dating range, the fact that the sequence of the dates matches the stratigraphy makes it highly likely that the absolute dating range seen in tumulus 26 reflects chronological reality. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the use, reuse and refilling of the central pit complex in barrow 26 of Lăpuș presumably took place over a hundred year period.

On the basis of these dates we may assume that the Late Bronze Age in central European terms and, in a phenomenological sense, the Urnfield cultural complex, which included the use of channelled pottery, began as early as the 14th c. B.C. in the Lăpuș valley. An absolute dating sequence for the typologically older incised pottery assemblages (Kacsó, Lăpuș I), which is still outstanding, will be needed in order to understand its emergence process, but none the less this calls into question the blanket assumption that the appearance of channelled pottery in the Carpathian basin dates to the 12th c. It also raises the important question of chronological priorities in the development of the new channelled pottery style. Naturally, with such high dates for a barrow with channelled pottery it will be interesting to see how far back the incised ceramic inventories can be dated. If we accept the dates published so far for the youngest inventories, which can typologically be dated to the 12th c. B.C. (Ha A), it seems that this marks the end of both burial activity and attendant ritual practices in mounds. Yet this is not the end of ritual deposition on the site as later metal hoards have been recovered within the area of the cemetery (see above). Again, these consisted of weapons and axes but also jewellery, which dominate the spectrum of the votive hoards (fig. 7), reflecting a shift in the denotation of ancestral worship. This shifting pattern of depositions between hoards and graves can also be observed in other areas at different times.³⁷ In the case of Lăpuș we are able to trace ritual activities in a monumental ritual landscape dedicated to burial and attendant ancestral cult for as long a period as 400 years, if not more.



Fig. 7 – Single find of a reworked middle Urnfield Period sword of “Schalenknaufschwert” type from the eastern edge of the cemetery (after Kacsó 2004).

Addendum

The Lăpuș-Project continued after the Udine Conference took place. The last campaign is planned for summer 2013. The more recent excavation campaigns – aided by extensive geomagnetic surveys – revealed a multi-phased ritual structure under barrow 26. Most remarkable is a monumental building of 23 by 12m with a central hearth. A preliminary report was published in 2010,³⁸ further articles are in preparation.

37. For one example of the early Urnfield period see Hansen 1991.

38. Metzner-Nebelsick C., Kacsó C., Nebelsick L.D. 2010, “A Bronze Age ritual structure on the edge of the Carpathian Basin”, in T. Bader, L. Marta (eds), *The Second Millenium B.C. in the Tisza Plain and Transylvania*, Satua Mare Studii și Comunicări ser. Arheologie 26/1, p. 219-233.

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THE EARLY BRONZE AGE RITUAL STRUCTURES AND NECROPOLIS FROM NEAR THE VILLAGE OF DUBENE, KARLOVO REGION

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the basic results of the exploration of a necropolis in the locality of Balinov Gorun near the village of Dubene (Karlovo region, Plovdiv district) in the recent few years. It focused on the areas between the mounds, where thirteen archaeological structures were recorded. Thousands of gold items and elements of strings of beads had been cached under a stone cover in nine of these, together with decorated ceramic vessels, a gold dagger, a silver blade, glass beads, etc. The bones found in some of them proved to belong to animals. The character of the material buried there led us to the suggestion that “ritual structures” was a more appropriate name for the subject of the study. The remaining four structures are characterized by stone construction only.

One of the five bigger mounds was also studied. It revealed two burials along with ceramic vessels, bronze and gold artefacts. Their stratigraphic position places the two burials in a late stage of the building of the mound.

The comparative dating of all studied structures places them in the Early Bronze Age III (in accordance with Bulgarian periodization) – generally speaking, in the second half of the third millennium B.C.

This paper also presents some hypotheses concerning the origin and manufacturing of the gold adornments and confirms some relatively old hypotheses concerning the contacts of Thrace with the Aegean and Anatolia.

The ritual structures and necropolis of Dubene (Karlovo region, Plovdiv district) are located in the sub-Balkan kettles, about 2km to the southeast of the village. A multi-strata settlement is located about 400m to the west-southwest of the site. Its occupation continued throughout the Early Bronze Age (EBA in the text below)¹ and it was related to the necropolis. Another EBA necropolis – that near Dolno Sahrane, Kazanluk Region – is known from the literature about the region.²

There are at least thirteen structures near Dubene. According to the data of the present research, some of them are small and low, while another five are larger and higher. The latter structures (interpreted as mounds) are up to 25m in diameter and up to 2.70m in height. The low ritual structures (RS in the

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1. Nikolova 1999, p. 28.

2. Getov 1964; Leshtakov 1994.

text below), which are located at present around the southernmost and the northernmost groups of the higher ones, also have different diameters – from 5.50m to 14.50m. Their height in respect to the surrounding terrain reaches 25-30cm. Some of them reveal excavation into the ancient terrain and their depth reaches down to 62cm. In total, fourteen of these structures have been studied up to 2007.

RS NO. 1

Its stone cover shows slightly elliptical shape, 6.10 x 6.40m in diameter and up to 30cm in depth. It was built of pebbles of medium size but some larger stones were also seen. Its central part is thick. A treasure-hunter's ditch had been dug through its centre, disturbing the structures below. Two structures were recorded below the cover. The first one was composed of sherds of four different ceramic vessels. Burnt small fragments of animal bones together with gold beads with diameters about 3.0-3.2mm were found under the stones of the second structure. Some of the ring-beads were discovered closely arranged one next to the other, which suggests that they were part of a string of beads. Others were partially or entirely fused. The preliminary analysis of one of the latter shows that the gold is of more than 18 carats and comprises: 76.51%Au, 19.60%Ag, 3.58%Cu and 0.31%Fe.³ Small pieces of charcoal were separated from the earth.

RS NO. 2

It is situated 100m to the northwest of Mound no. 1. Four ditches dug by treasure-hunters were visible in the terrain. Some of them were as deep as 60cm from the present day surface level. The treasure-hunter's activities together with the effects of intensive agriculture had almost ruined the archaeological structure. The stones from its cover were scattered mainly in a southerly direction. Only a short arc in the northern part of the studied area may still be considered as being *in situ*. The stones that had been part of the cover are of medium size but some larger ones were also seen. Sherds of five ceramic vessels and many gold objects mixed with earth were found under and around the stones.

The gold items presented the following types: bi-conical beads; ring-like beads of small, medium and large diameters; cylindrical beads of various sizes; round appliques with decoration in relief and two symmetrically situated pairs of holes; convex appliques with two or four holes; a rectangular string separator with elliptic cross-section and four holes situated longitudinally; a prismatic plating with almost square cross-section; adze-shaped small objects; a string separator with 11 holes; a spiral pendant of one and a half turns. The preliminary analysis of one of the convex appliques showed that the gold is of 22 carats and contains: over 95.70%Au, 2.33%Ag, 1.62%Cu and 0.35%Fe.

No bones were found but this possibly due to the highly disturbed nature of the structure.

RS NO. 3

It was about 20cm above the surrounding ground level and the ancient ground is about 25cm below the present day surface. The stone cover is slightly elliptical, 9.44 x 9.95m. Its maximal thickness reaches 30cm and it slopes slightly towards the south-southeast. The observations made during the study suggest the following reconstruction of the process of building the structure. A shallow pit, 6.90 x 7.30m and depth down to 20cm, had been done first. It was followed by the excavation of eight pits down to 1.10m deep and

3. Hristov 2007, p. 228.

1.05m in diameter. Pebbles of medium size were found in them. The pits were conical in shape. A miniature vessel was found in one of the pits, and only ceramic sherds and isolated charcoal fragments were found in the others. The pits form a rectangular bordered area, 4.50m long and 3.60m wide in a northwest-southeast orientation; the south eastern side is apsidal, as one of the pits protrudes. At least five different ceramic vessels had then been placed in the pit – bowls, cups, pitchers, etc. Among them, a bowl richly adorned with incised decoration outside and inside, two symmetrical handles and a T-shaped rim, and sherds from a Yunatsite type cup stand out. Small fragments of animal bones and pieces of tooth enamel were found among and above them. Various elements of gold threaded adornments and objects, among which 16 gold spirals, were found scattered in this part of the structure. Small beads with diameters up to 2.7mm were also discovered. Some of them have thin incisions in their peripheries, others were of flattened spherical shape with deep incisions and two gold adornments. The latter had probably been cut on the occasion of the deposition of the other offerings and the piling of the stone cover, since a large proportion of them were found around and on the vessels and far fewer in the soil between the pebbles of the two lowest rows of the cover.

The first adornment was located with the offerings in the northern part of the area and was composed of gold separators and beads. The separators are of different sizes and shapes and are divided into three types. The adornment also includes small round beads with diameters up to 1.8mm. Some of these were found in the holes of the separators of the first and second type. The openings of the holes are very close to the diameters of the beads. These arguments together with their situation under the cover suggest that they most probably belong to one and the same adornment.

The second adornment was found with offerings in the south part of the area and was partially mixed up with the elements of the first adornment in its southern end. Some of its elements were discovered in the lower parts of the stone cover. The adornment is composed of gold separators and beads, which are 3mm in diameter. The reconstruction suggests that the separators had possibly been evenly spaced out with threaded beads in between. Their location, the diameter of the holes and the analogy with the first adornment justifies the choice of uniting them in one adornment. Threads were discovered in the holes of some separators and beads, which demonstrate that the beads were threaded before their deposition into the mound no. 3.

The total number of the gold items is 15001 and their total weight is over 250g.

RS NO. 4

The structure was situated 100m from structure no. 3 and had a stone cover of pebbles that were mostly of medium size, just like the first three. The shape of the cover was slightly elliptical, 5.55 x 5.75m, and its maximum thickness at the middle part reached 30cm. It was discovered during the survey that a pit had been dug in the ancient terrain. It was 4.60 x 5.40m in diameter and 56-62cm deep. Several fragments of a ruminant's tooth were found covered with small pebbles in the north-western section together with small pieces of crumbling and burnt mortar. A layer of grey-brownish earth with clay and sand had been spread over the entire pit. The thickness of the layer reached 28cm. Upon this layer, which also comprised some small pieces of charcoal, in the centre of the structure were placed four vessels – among which were a bowl, a spouted vessel and a Yunatsite type of cup, etc. Four piles of pebbles were also found here. Twenty one gold items, among which were gold beads and spirals of gold wire, a bronze dagger and a whetstone were discovered in the area enclosed by the vessels in the north, east and west. The stone cover had been piled over them.

RS NO. 5

It is situated between the large mounds nos. 4 and 5. It is composed of pebbles of medium size that formed the partially preserved cover of the structure. It was discovered in the course of the excavation that pits of different dimensions had been dug on six spots. These were filled, like in the case of RS no. 3, with

small and predominantly medium size pebbles. A ceramic vessel with a cup placed inside it was found in pit no. 1, while pit no. 2 comprised ceramic sherds only. The discovery of the vessels in pit no. 1 and the shallow depth of three of the pits should lead us to revise the theory based on RS no. 3 according to which the pits with stones supported some kind of wooden construction.⁴ It is more probable that they had ritual functions by marking the space in which ceramic vessels, metal and glass items were deposited. The situation in RS no. 5 is similar to the one in RS no. 3: in both cases the pits, which are six in this case, form a rectangular area with northwest-southeast orientation in which the offerings had been deposited.

Ceramic vessels, some of which were richly adorned with incised, white encrusted decoration, were discovered in the area enclosed by the pits filled with pebbles. In one of these vessels, namely a bowl covered by two other ceramic vessels, there were a gold lamella, a silver lidded box, a ceramic cup combining Thracian and Aegean-Anatolian elements (which provides additional evidence for contacts with the south during EBA III),⁵ and a bronze knife with two gold platings on the grip. 5479 gold items – spirals, separators and beads from adornments, as well as small bone fragments, a silver dagger, a gold dagger and glass beads – were found to the south of this vessel and to the east of the other ceramic vessels.

RS NO. 6

It is located about 30m to the east of the large mound no. 5. The treasure-hunter's excavation, 60cm deep, disturbed the almost exact centre of the structure. The structure itself was of roughly circular shape with a diameter of about 14.50m. It was made of two separate ditches. One was almost oval with a diameter of 8.20m and a depth of 26-36cm. Sherds of three ceramic vessels were discovered at its centre. Fifteen gold beads were also found in this part of the structure. A second dike had been dug around this first round one. It was up to 2.70m wide and 26cm deep and might be taken for a ditch. Large stones from a river bed, up to 70cm long, were placed in it at various distances, as well as pieces of broken rock. The two trenches and the large stones were covered with a pile of pebbles of predominantly medium size. This is the first time that such a structure was found on this site.

LARGE MOUND NO. 3

The mound belongs to a burial mound necropolis. Four more large mounds are clearly visible in the present day terrain. They form a well defined arc with north-south direction. Starting from the north, Mound no. 3 is the third one, and the largest in the necropolis. It is located about 200m north of the southern group of ritual structures. Its diameter is over 25m and its height reaches 2.70m. Six treasure-hunter's pits of various dimensions and depths were recorded prior to the excavations. The mound was studied in its entirety which made it possible to reconstruct the sequence of actions that led to its formation.

1. Stones from a river bed formed an arc, almost in the exact centre of the mound. Archaeological material was found around and between them, which suggests that the construction had been left unfinished or, more probably, had been destroyed as early as the EBA.

2. New structures were started on top of it and the piling of earth above them is asymmetrical in shape. One almost rectangular pit was dug into its northern part. It is orientated northwest-southeast and was 2.50 x 1.50 x 0.80m. It was filled up with stones from a river bed. Three EBA ceramic vessels, namely a bowl with two pitchers in it, were found in the north western part. Grave no. 1 was probably dug into the mound at the same time in the south part of the pit described above. The grave pit was almost rectangular and

4. Hristov 2005, p. 129.

5. Leshtakov 1996, p. 264-267.

was 20cm deep and contained the inhumation of a man of 35-45. He had been laid in extended position on his back with his head to the west-southwest. Eleven biconical gold beads and a gold spiral were discovered on the north side of the grave.

3. The piling of the first (and stratigraphically deepest) stone cover begun after the construction of the grave and the rectangular pit. It was up to 40cm thick and was built of stones of medium and large sizes. This cover did not embrace the entire area of the mound and was kidney-shaped, elongated in a north-south direction. The earth between the stones was brown and saturated with small stones.

4. A round pit was dug afterwards through the first cover in the southern part of the mound. A baby or a small child was buried in it (Grave no. 2), also with its head to the west. The skeleton had substantially decayed and only traces were discernible.

5. A layer of brown earth saturated with small stones was then piled upon the lowest cover all over the surface of the mound. It was up to 30cm thick and a second stone cover was piled over its whole surface. This cover was made of medium and small pebbles and covered the entire structure. Its thickness reached 60cm.

ANALOGIES TO THE COMPLEX

A similar situation is known from Gradishte in the region of Kumanovo, Macedonia, where pebbles and ceramic sherds, as well as spindle elements and weights deposited in natural pits plastered with clay, were discovered around the mound. These structures were also dated to the EBA.⁶

Similar but earlier small mounds, with pits below the pebble cover, cremation and piled on stones, are known from Ostrovul Shimian from the area of the Koțofeni Culture in Romania. They are dated to the second stage of the EBA.⁷ The bones which are identifiable in the ritual structures of Dubene belong to animals.

DATING OF THE STRUCTURES

The shape and ornamentation of the ceramic vessels lead us to date these structures with precision to the third stage of the Thracian EBA and possibly, for some of the structures, to its very beginning. The vessels with T-shaped rim, the Yunatsite type cups, the handles with a projection in their upper part, the spouted vessel and the pitchers find parallels in a series of sites in Thrace, such as Yunatsite,⁸ Karanovo,⁹ etc., which have been dated to EBA III.¹⁰ The shape of one of the bowls has a parallel among contemporaneous vessels from the regions north of the Danube River – Odaya Turkului.¹¹

The gold items belong to a broader chronological range.

Adornment no. 1

Beads with a similar shape are to be found among the treasures from Troy¹² and Poliochni.¹³

6. Trajkovska 1999, p. 49-59.

7. Popilian 1999, p. 55-56, pl. 3.

8. Katincharov, Matsanova 1993, pl. 17.

9. Hiller, Nikolov 2002, p. 12.

10. Leshtakov 2006, p. 177-182.

11. Băjenaru 2003, fig. 2.

12. *Der Schatz aus Troja* 1996, Schatz A: p. 78 -101; Schatz D: p. 118.

13. Bernabò Brea 1976, pl. 249a-d, 250: 29-30, 36-40; 252: 6-10.

Adornment no. 2

A similar, reconstructed, adornment composed of strings of beads and string separators is known from the region of the Nitra Culture in Slovakia, namely in the necropolis near Branch, grave no. 160, dated to the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (MBA).¹⁴ Similar string separators made of bone were also found in a series of sites, mostly along the Middle Danube.¹⁵ These are dated to EBA III and to early MBA. A similar bone object was found in Bulgaria in the EBA layer of the Devetashka Cave.¹⁶ To date, it is the southernmost object of this kind. These bone separators are relatively close in shape to their parallels in gold. The adornments from Troy seem to be reconstructions.¹⁷

The end-piece from the Large Mound no. 3 should most probably be interpreted as the end-plating on a dagger's grip. Such a piece is known from graves E and K from Alaca Hüyük.¹⁸

More generally, the numerous gold items discovered in the structures find their parallels in the strings of bi-conical and cylindrical beads from Rupite, Petrich Region¹⁹ and both in earlier and later complexes of a region stretching from Asia Minor to Central Europe, mainly those of EBA Poliochni,²⁰ Leukas,²¹ Troy (dated to the Troy IIg phase²² which is generally referred to as EBA II and II-III), Eskiypar (EBA III).²³ Others have exact parallels in finds from private collections which are dated much earlier,²⁴ while the separator with four holes finds its closest parallel in the Troad.²⁵ If we accept the dating of the structures to the early EBA III, some of the objects find further parallels in complexes of the MBA in Gulubovo²⁶ and Ovchartsı,²⁷ as well as in finds from regions outside Bulgaria, for example the necropolis near Mokrin, dated to EBA III,²⁸ the Franzhausen cemeteries in Austria,²⁹ some graves in the necropolis near Lekı Male,³⁰ Velika Vrbitsa near Zaychar in Serbia³¹ and Tisafüred-Asotelom in Hungary,³² dated to the Middle or Late Bronze Age. No other analogies with other published objects are known to me.

Such a large concentration of gold objects and adornment elements in the few structures described above suggests that these were probably produced in the region, or in close vicinity, of the settlement and the necropolis. This is all the more likely in view of the fact that gold in ancient times was most often alluvial.³³ An indirect proof of this is to be found in the gold-bearing tributaries of the river Maritsa, namely Luda Yana and Topolnitsa, which come from the southern slopes of Sredna Gora, and the river Stryama³⁴ itself,

14. Vladár 1973, pl. 16-18.

15. Popescu 2003, p. 17-30.

16. Mikov, Dzhambazov 1960, pl. 87 b.

17. *Troy, Mycenae, Tiryns* 1990, fig. 41.

18. Koşay 1951, pl. 166, fig. 1; pl. 182, fig. 4.

19. Katincharov, Avramova 1994, p. 4-5; Avramova 2002, cat. no. 120, p. 94-97.

20. Bernabò Brea 1976, pl. 247-250, 252.

21. Dörpfeld 1927, pl. 60: 1, 2, 3; 61: 1, 2.

22. *Der Schatz aus Troja* 1996, Schätze A, D, F, J.

23. Özgüç, Temizer 1993, p. 613-628.

24. Lazov 2005, cat. nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7.

25. Bass 1966; Bass 1970, pl. 85, fig. 28.

26. Leshtakov 1996, fig. 11-14.

27. Alexandrov 2007, fig. 2-12.

28. Girić 1971, pl. V 1; XV 5.

29. Neugebauer-Maresch, Neugebauer 1989, pl. 10, 1, 20.

30. Kowiańska-Piasukowa, Kurnatowski 1953, fig. 27, 7-9.

31. Hartmann 1970, pl. 28, Au. 1573.

32. Bóna 1975, pl. 198, C 11.

33. Avilova *et al.* 1999, p. 59.

34. Tokmakchieva, Daskalov 2005, p. 36, 40; Avdev 2005, p. 261-267.

the bed of which is close to the settlement and the site under study. This makes it reasonable to claim that the majority of the gold found in the southern Balkans and in Asia Minor originated from the Balkans; why not also from Bulgaria? Incidentally, this view has been mentioned and judged possible by other authors.³⁵

Geological research in the region of Kraishteto, Southwest Bulgaria, found some rather interesting finds among placer gold: small ring-like beads, beads with decoration in relief along their periphery, spirals, etc.³⁶ These objects may be dated on the basis of analogous finds to EBA II or, more probably, to EBA III. Most of them bear the same typological and ornamental features as the finds and elements from the structures near Dubene, as well as those from Troy and Poliochni. It is possible that these were imports from the Karlovo region or elsewhere but it is more probable that there was another manufacturing centre of gold adornments during the EBA.

The appearance of several types of gold objects in the Thracian EBA III was probably due to influences or direct trade contacts with Asia Minor and the northern parts of the Aegean during EBA II-III or early EBA III. This is partially supported by the analysis of the ceramic material of some settlements in Thrace too.³⁷ The appearance of new shapes like the spirals, the pyramidal beads, etc. in Dubene is probably due to the development of the tradition in the manufacturing of gold adornments. This part of present day Bulgaria has exerted influence in a northerly direction, and most of all, to the northwest. The spirals with one or more backward turns and the convex appliquéés may be picked out as examples. Similar finds were discovered in the lands along the Lower and Middle Danube among MBA archaeological finds.

Thus, the ritual structures near Dubene appear to be a connecting point between Europe, Asia Minor and the Near East during the EBA. Similar EBA III gold objects were found in Thrace and West Bulgaria. The imported vessels found in Thrace also belong to the beginning of the EBA III. We find them shortly later in Serbia and later on as shapes of the MBA of Central Europe. Thrace and, in particular, the ritual structures and the necropolis presented here therefore illustrate contacts between those parts of the world during the EBA and the beginning of the MBA, forming a chain of influences from southeast to northwest.

Furthermore, the new finds give an idea of the high technological skill in metalworking and in particular in the treatment of gold during the EBA. In this respect, certain elements and objects are of particular interest, like the biconical beads from RS no. 2 and the Large Mound no. 3, the miniature beads from the threaded adornments in ritual structures nos. 2, 3, 5 and 6, the pyramidal beads from RS no. 4, the string separators from ritual structures nos. 2, 3 and 5, the convex appliquéés from RS no. 2, the gold dagger and the glass beads from RS no. 5, which all demonstrate a high level of technological skill in the treatment of gold and in the accompanying technologies and techniques of the EBA.

The concentration of so many finds in the few structures that we have studied so far suggests in turn that their owners (individuals or groups) had a special status in the social and economic life of the EBA. Metal itself was a symbol of high social status both in appearance and in ownership from as early as the Late Chalcolithic period, as is well attested by the necropolis at Varna.³⁸ It is beyond doubt that gold played the same role in Thrace during the EBA. The fact that the finds from Dubene are mostly adornments means that they are markers of social status and prestige.

At the same time, if we assume that the adornments were produced locally, they provide indirect evidence about some kind of organization in their production. This activity should have been narrowly and strictly specialized, and practiced by only a few, like the production of bronzes, and possibly the ceramic production as well. Social differentiation during the third phase of the EBA is indirectly proven by the houses of particularly large dimensions discovered in some settlements and by the close contacts established with Asia Minor and the Near East.

This differentiation was a consequence of the accumulation of features characterizing the archaeological evidence as early as EBA II: fortified settlements; the decoration of ceramic products during the Mihalich stage; the production of more and more bronze objects, some of which are, according to recent

35. Leshtakov 2006, p. 169; Bachmann 2006, p. 74; Yakar 1985, p. 28-29.

36. Tsintsov 1993, p. 43-52; Tsintsov 2005, p. 217-219.

37. Leshtakov 1996.

38. Ivanov 1997; Renfrew, Bahn 1991, p. 356.

research, already true tin-bronzes in EBA III,³⁹ an alloy that appeared in Anatolia as early as EBA II;⁴⁰ and the sanctuaries dating from the late EBA II or the early EBA III,⁴¹ some of which have been in use for a short time.

One of the most important questions put forward by the studies published so far concerns the interpretation both of the structures within the site and of the site itself as a whole. The bone material is most indicative in this respect. Analysis shows that in the cases where the bones can be identified they are of animal origin (with the exception of the two graves with human skeletons in Large Mound no. 3). The absence of human remains in the low structures suggests that we are not dealing with real graves in this case, in spite of the fact that the structures resemble to a certain extent the low burial tumuli with stone cover which are known from both within the region of Thrace and outside it.⁴² In our opinion, the term “ritual structures” is most appropriate in this preliminary stage of interpretation. It is also appropriate because of the presence of human burials in the only tumulus which has been studied so far (Large Mound no. 3). In the small mounds, the case is reminiscent of a “burial” or symbolic deposition of funeral offerings – gold items, ceramic vessels, bronze, silver, glass and stone objects, as well as animal bones. Thus, these structures bear the characteristics of mounds with stone covers as far as building aspects are concerned but should be connected to rituals and ritual practices as far as interpretation is concerned. They supplement therefore the EBA constructions of this kind which are already known, namely pits and round ditch borders.⁴³

If we assume this is true, the site discussed here was composed mainly of ritual structures and should probably be perceived also as a sanctuary of a new type, in view of the low and small structures connected ritual activities. Most of all, this means that in this case the rituals included the depositing of ceramic vessels, gold artefacts, animal bones and, in some cases, bronze, silver and glass items, and their sealing from above with pebbles. This sealing is reminiscent to a great extent of “burial” or “deposition” of finds, which in turn might have been connected to ritual of various types and characters, as I have mentioned above.

If we accept this hypothesis, the site should be split conceptually into two zones: ritual structures and necropolis. The first zone comprises ritual structures, which above we called small mounds. They may be related to rituals that included the burial or deposition of ceramic, bronze, silver, glass and gold artefacts, and animal bones. At this stage of our research, such structures were identified to the east of Large Mound no. 1, between Large Mounds nos. 4 and 5 and around Large Mound no. 5. The second zone is formed by the five Large Mounds. Structures that included human burials have already been studied in one of them.

The discovery of so many gold artefacts in Thrace was to be expected. It firmly places this part of Southeast Europe into the context of rapidly increasing production and usage of gold during the EBA. Thus, from a statistical point of view at least,⁴⁴ this territory can be seen to be equal to Asia Minor, the Near East and the Caucasus. In this way, these finds fall into the southern circle of the Circumpontic metallurgical province.⁴⁵ They also clearly contradict the claim that gold disappeared almost completely in the Carpathian-Balkan region after the end of the Chalcolithic period and did not appear again before the Late Bronze Age,⁴⁶ an opinion that is due mostly to the lack of archaeological research.

In conclusion, I would like to point out the significance of this research in understanding the formation of the Thracian community which became known to us from written sources concerning events later than the LBA: the accumulation of such a quantity of precious objects – even by the standards of the time – is a clear indication of a strong consolidation of the population.

39. Hristova 2005, p. 16.

40. Yakar 1984, p. 73.

41. Leshtakov *et al.* 2002, p. 29-31.

42. Nikolova 1992, p. 1-10; Panayotov, Alexandrov 1995, p. 87, fig. 3.

43. Kostova 2006.

44. Avilova 2003; Chernykh 2005, p. 54-56.

45. Chernykh 1991, p. 163-165.

46. Chernykh, Avilova 1991, p. 252; Chernykh 1992, p. 144.

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BURIAL MOUNDS OF THE BRONZE AGE AT MUŠEGO NEAR MONKODONJA RESULTS OF THE EXCAVATIONS 2006-2007

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ABSTRACT

Thirteen stone tumuli have been documented to date on the Mušego-Mon Sego hill in the vicinity of Rovinj, which we consider to be an integral part of a necropolis belonging to the Bronze Age fortified hillfort settlement of Monkodonja-Moncodogno, located on the neighbouring north eastern hill. Tumuli nos. 6 and 7 were explored during 2006 and 2007. Systematic excavations gave significant new results, especially concerning architecture, despite the fact that both of them had been rummaged and hence damaged by the activities of "hidden treasure" hunters. Both tumuli were erected in a particular way, differing not only from one another but also from the monuments of this type which have already been excavated in the territory of Istria.

Tumuli as sepulchral monuments represent a characteristic mode of interment of Bronze Age Istria in general, next to several smaller size necropoleis alongside hillforts.¹ Individual tumuli of larger dimensions were recorded in isolated positions on hilltops, as well as those of more modest proportions that were strewn on the slopes of hillforts or adjacent areas. Initial excavations started towards the end of the 19th c., the majority of them being carried out at the beginning of the 20th c.² The results of these early excavations were poorly documented or else there were no records at all because the finds from these tombs were either very modest or non-existent.³ More data was made public by A. Gnirs, who also provided drawings of tumuli architecture along with the graves,⁴ and then by Bačić, who explored Maklavun, Žamnjak, Krmedski Novi grad and several other sites.⁵ Battaglia was likewise active in this field, having unearthed a few in the vicinity of the Vrčin hillfort. In addition, he also created the first chart showing the extent of stone burial mounds, noting that they are spread in a manner which resembles that of the characteristic circular field structures called *kažuni* or *casite* that are especially concentrated in the region of

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1. Čović 1983a, p. 118, 124-125; Čović 1983b, p. 234-236; Batović 1983, p. 287-288.

2. Marchesetti 1892, p. 255, 258; Cleva 1894, p. 497-499; Gnirs 1906.

3. Marchesetti 1903, p. 99, 148.

4. Gnirs 1906; Gnirs 1925, p. 38-43.

5. Bačić 1954-1957, p. 18-23; Bačić 1960; Bačić 1973.

southern Istria.⁶ However, while the concentration of stone tumuli, which do not have to be exclusively sepulchral monuments, is in actual fact very large in the defined region,⁷ it should also be noted that a systematic registration of such structures was never compiled. In the past few years a more detailed topography of smaller, archaeologically unexplored areas was carried out, on which new sites were invariably discovered. A further advantage was that this was carried out not just in the southern part of the Peninsula.⁸

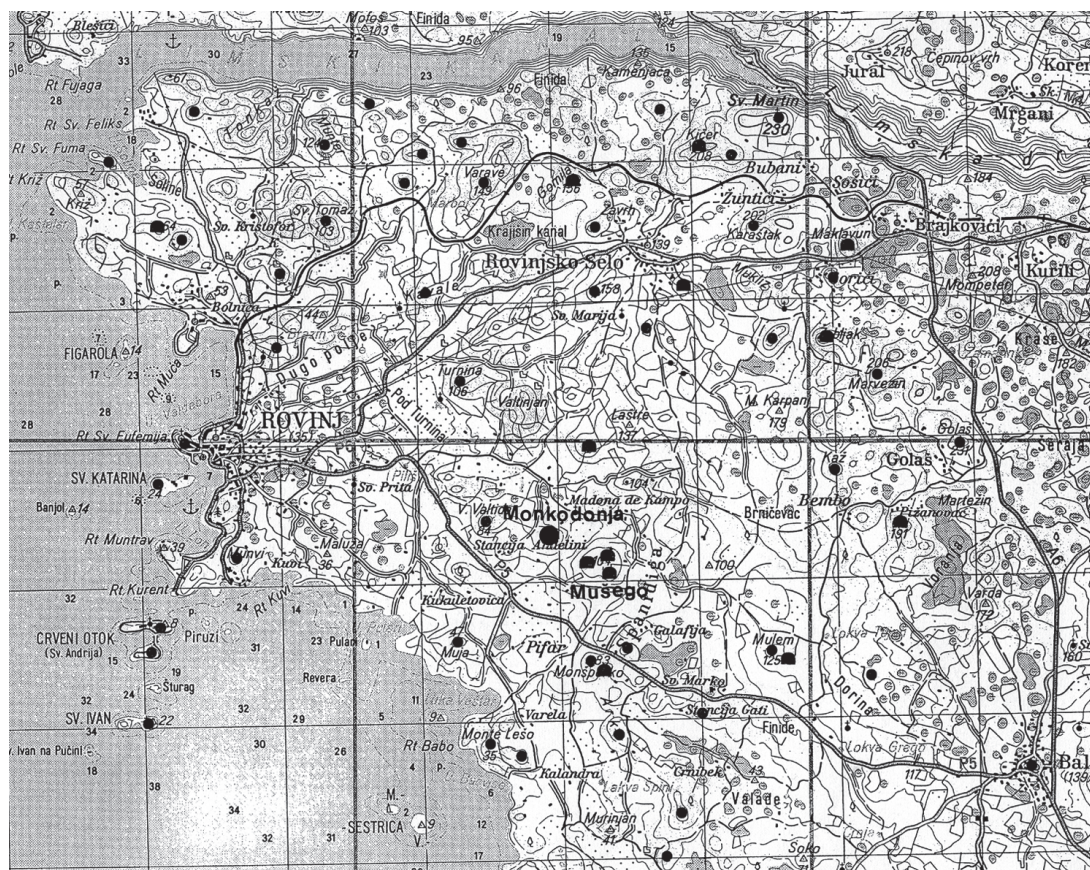


Fig. 1 – Hillforts and tumuli situated in the hinterland of Rovinj.

The elevation of Mušego lies roughly 1km to the southeast of the fortified Bronze Age settlement of Monkodonja, in an area marked by a large concentration of hillforts and stone tumuli in the hinterland of Rovinj (fig. 1). We assume that the sepulchral tumuli on Mušego were connected to Monkodonja, considering its importance and the fact that only two tombs have been unearthed alongside it.⁹ A survey of the Mušego plateau enabled us to recognize and mark 13 stone tumuli of various sizes, the majority of which were already ransacked. Two stone tumuli of larger dimensions are especially prominent, one on the south eastern and the other on the northern edge of the plateau facing Monkodonja, whereas the majority of the others were hidden in dense underbrush.

After vegetation on the eastern side of the plateau was cleared in an area where a group of four tumuli are located, we began with the exploration of tumulus no. 6 in 2006. Keeping in mind that the tombs within the tumulus were already rummaged, we endeavoured to document the architecture itself and the mode

6. Battaglia 1926, p. 72-79, fig. 10; Battaglia 1958, p. 421, 428.

7. Codacci Terlević 2006, p. 42-53, fig. 1.

8. Field reports in the documentation of the Archaeological Museum of Istria in Pula.

9. See Teržan, Hänsel in this publication.

of construction. In the ruins of tumulus no. 6, with a preserved height of 1.5m, we were able to identify a section of the edge of a circular wall made of larger blocks of stone, as well as the central grave, which had already been emptied out at sometime in the past.



Fig. 2 – Mušego. Grave tumulus no. 6: ground plan.

As a result of exploration activities (fig. 2) we were able to free a circular wall with a diameter of 11m from the ruins, erected with larger, partially hewn blocks of stone with a trapezoidal shape and a gently rounded-off outer edge. The southern section of the circular wall is still preserved to a height represented by two rows of blocks. Previously unseen masonry structures were documented alongside the circular wall of the tumulus; outside of the masonry circle on the eastern and western sides there are what appears to be access platforms which were erected before the completion of the circular wall. Their function can only be guessed at. They could have played a constructive function during the placing of the blocks of stone themselves; or else they could have been used to mark the way to the central grave before it was covered with stone blocks.

The central grave in tumulus no. 6, which lies in the north-south direction and had already been ransacked in the past, was emptied almost to the bottom and had been well visible for a long period of time. The western and eastern slabs that make up the grave are 180 and 160cm long respectively, with a width of 70cm and a thickness of 15-20cm. The usual, hewn vertical grooves, into which the shorter sides of the slab grave were set, are visible on the interior sides of the slabs. The interior length of the grave measures 130cm, its width 50cm and its depth 70cm. An examination of the interiors of the grave and its immediate surroundings lead us to the conclusion that it was filled with shingle and crushed rock. According to the small bone fragments of the deceased, which were collected in the grave and most of all in the area around the cist, it contained several deceased. Besides the bone remains in and around the grave itself, numerous pottery fragments, baked earth lumps and six amber beads were discovered in the area of the tumulus.

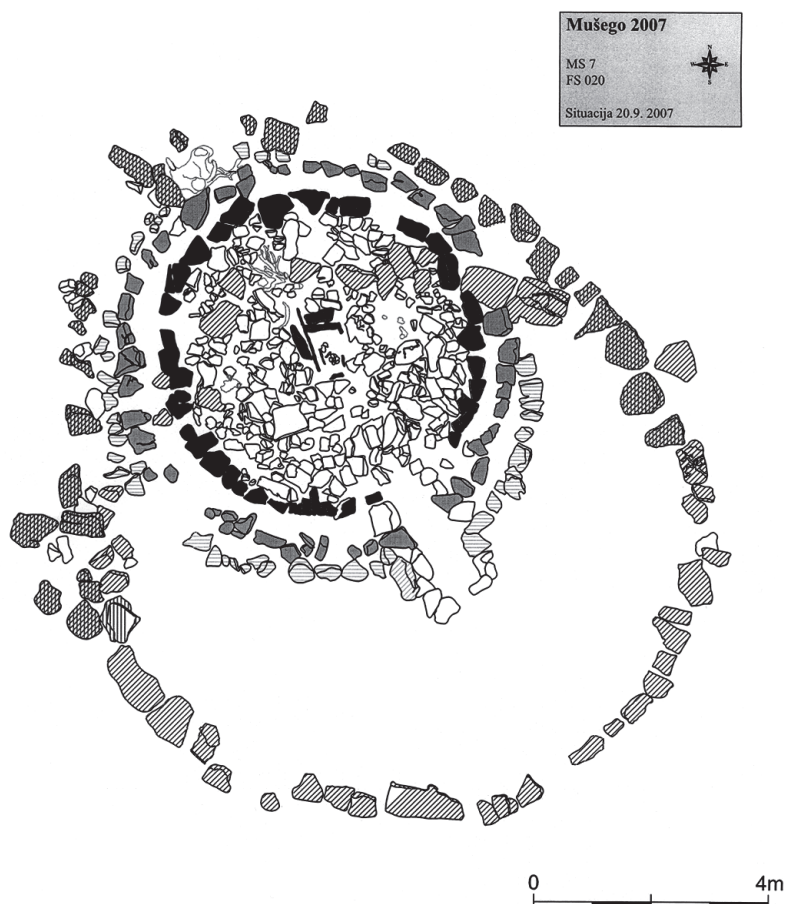


Fig. 3 – Mušego. Grave tumulus no. 7: ground plan.

Another bead, which had been crushed, was discovered during the examination of the stratum of rubble outside of the circular wall. Fragments of hewn slabs, representing the shorter sides of the cist, and a part of the lid, were discovered within the area encircled by the wall. By deepening the excavation of the south western quarter of the tumulus we managed to document the mode in which the tumulus itself was put together. Big blocks of stone as well as slabs were placed in an oblique and circular manner around the cist, *i.e.* from the middle towards the outer circular wall.

The subsequent tumulus unearthed in 2007 is denoted with the number 7. In the central part of the ruin was a rectangular excavation that was carried out in an undefined period of time, which was 2m long and approximately 1m wide and deep. Located alongside its edge was the larger part of a limestone slab which served, perhaps, as part of the grave lid. The exploration of tumulus 7 began in this excavation and its immediate vicinity, in order to acquire data about the likely position of the devastated central grave. Unfortunately, no elements typical of a cist grave were discovered. Nonetheless, we managed to unearth modest fragments of bone and pottery.

The successive excavation of the entire area of tumulus ruins and the removal of strata of stone have made it possible to discover an as yet untouched grave that had the shape of a small cist, and which was named “secondary central grave no. 1” (*fig. 3*). It is located not more than approximately 2m to the north of the old excavation marked as the “central grave”, and it runs in a north-south direction. The grave is constructed with vertically and horizontally placed limestone slabs, 4-5cm thick, buttressed with walls from the outside. The slab on the western side of the cist is 110cm long, whereas the others are of smaller dimensions. The interior measurements of the grave are as follows: length 90cm, width 50cm and depth only 25-30cm. Within this space, the bone remains of several deceased were placed.

The bone remains of the deceased as well as numerous fragments of pottery vessels, remnants of jewellery with fine bronze wire and amber beads, were all located in the dark brown soil mixed together with small crushed rock and gravel.

With the exception of the contents of the grave itself, the particularly interesting architecture of this tumulus represents a novelty, even though it has not yet been fully excavated. Already at this stage it is possible to notice the circular walls with a diameter of 5.5m and 6.5m, which encircled the cist of "secondary central grave no. 1", and the positioning of this structure in relation to the older burial that we, in all probability, have not reached yet but which was likewise encircled by a wall made up of bigger blocks of stone with a diameter measuring 11m. Both of these circular structures are themselves encircled by a special outer circular wall, which has also not been fully unearthed yet.

Despite the fact that several sepulchral tumuli have been unearthed in the region of Istria, this is the first time that we are in position to use the results of anthropological analyses, though not yet completed, and have at our disposal a few ¹⁴C dates.

B. Tessmann carried out the first analysis of bone remains from tumulus no. 6. In accordance with her observations of the small fragments, the bones were placed in the grave after tissue had completely disappeared. We assume that the bodies of the deceased were exposed beforehand in some other place, something that had already been observed in conjunction with graves from Monkodonja. She identified the remains of at least three adult individuals and a child. Among the adults, it is possible to single out a male individual with a relatively high degree of certainty.

For this group of finds we also have three radiocarbon dates (sigma 2 – 95% probability).¹⁰

I 1563-1445 B.C.

II 1408-1288 B.C.

III 1368-1194 B.C.

The median date corresponds to the 14th c. B.C., *i.e.* the Middle Bronze Age and the period of the Central European tumuli culture.

B. Tessmann was also the first to review the bone remains from tumulus no. 7, where again she noticed the presence of several individuals whose remains were not found in an anatomical position and, judging by their worn out condition, they were exposed elsewhere before being laid to rest into the grave.

From the analysis of the same remains made by Prof. Bogusch from the Freie Universität Berlin, the remains of three adult individuals (two males and a female) and one to three infants were placed into that grave.

He succeeded in putting together the fragments of almost an entire skull belonging to a male adult individual, 30-40 years old, whereas the teeth from the maxilla fell out post mortem.

The other skull, missing the facial part, belonged to a female adult individual, 30-40 years old. It also features a hole made by a hard blow with a sharp object.

The infant bones are preserved in smaller crushed fragments, which leads him to the assumption that they were crushed on purpose using some force.

Consequently, he concludes that the female and the infants endured some sort of violence before their deaths.

He also noticed that not a single fragment of the skull base with the spine aperture had been preserved, which once again corroborates the theory that bodies of the deceased were left to rot in some other location.

As we repeatedly arrived at such conclusions, we can speak about a special ritual that included the exposure of the deceased before placing them into the cist grave. Besides, from the injuries noticed on the bones, it follows that women and children were most probably sacrificed, considering that the presence of a female adult and an infant had already been documented, especially in tumuli explored by Bačić (Maklavun, Žamnjak, Krmedski Novi grad).¹¹

10. The analyses were carried out by Prof. Dr P.M. Grootes, Leibniz Labor für Altersbestimmung und Isotopenforschung, Christian-Albrechts-Universität, Kiel.

11. Bačić 1954-1957, p. 19-21; Bačić 1960, p. 198-201.

Sepulchral tumuli appear in the region of Istria with the Cetina culture,¹² and then continue through all phases of the Istrian Bronze Age, until the advent of cremation in the burial rite. They were erected on detached elevations and on the slopes of hillocks alongside fortified settlements. In the graves documented above, finds of an explicitly luxurious nature were discovered. However, the mere existence of widespread ransacking activities is possibly a sign that in one or the other of these graves either items made of precious metals¹³ or arms made of bronze were perhaps unearthed, all of which would invariably have attracted treasure hunters.

The grave structure is in most cases assembled from hewn stone slabs, the bottom of the grave often being covered with a layer of gravel. Graves made of drywalls have so far been documented only on Marić and Maklavun. Each tumulus usually covered a single grave and now on Mušego we have evidence of subsequent usage of the same tumulus, which in all probability is not an isolated occurrence. For example, on Mušego, in ransacked tumulus no. 9 the remains of two cists made of slabs are visible, whereas the grave explored by Bačić on Krmedski Novi grad lies on the very edge of a stone tumulus that possibly covers several graves and measures approximately 16m in diameter.¹⁴

In any case, tumuli represent sepulchral monuments belonging to the elite of the communities that lived in fortified hillfort settlements and it is likewise possible that they could, at the same time, have marked the boundaries of the areas they dominated. The biggest ones are located on prominent strategic elevations and have a visual communication with the sea.

Tumuli, and the mode of interment into graves assembled from stone slabs, which are appearing in the region running along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea and the Western Balkans, as well as the frequent phenomenon of multiple burials in the same grave, corroborate the intensity of communication that existed between these faraway lands and the many interests they shared.¹⁵

At first glance the group of tumuli on Mušego reminds us of structures of Early Helladic circular R-graves from Steno on the Ionic island of Leukas, or, of the tumuli necropolis of the Flur Kriaritsi on the Chalkidike Peninsula, with its origin likewise dated to the Early Helladic II period.¹⁶

Considering the shortage of any special natural resources, we assume that the importance of the elite, which inhabited Monkodonja and was buried on Mušego, stemmed from particular activities connected with important commercial routes, especially maritime ones. The same can likewise be assumed for the necropoleis of Steno or Velika Gruda.¹⁷

These activities were of crucial importance for Istria until the beginning of the period of Romanization. The excavation of the tumuli on Mušego is only just beginning. We are, therefore, convinced that the continuation of explorative activities and the consolidation of obtained data will enable us to interpret particular phenomena in a more concrete manner.

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12. Contribution by G. Codacci-Terlević in this volume.

13. For example, G. Cleva mentions a find consisting of a spiral made of three coils of gold wire, unearthed in a tumulus grave on Monte Svenche in the vicinity of Rovinjko selo (Cleva 1894, p. 498).

14. Bačić 1954-1957, p. 22.

15. Primas 1996, p. 126-135.

16. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 82-89, fig. 3 and p. 77.

17. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 157-162.

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THE PRINCELY TUMULUS GRUDA BOLJEVIĆA PODGORICA, MONTENEGRO

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of the excavation of an earthen tumulus of the Eneolithic/Early Bronze Age period. The artefacts deposited in this burial monument posthumously testify to the high, “princely” social status of the deceased. The central grave is a rectangular pit dug into the virgin soil, partially surrounded by a number of unworked rocks of small dimensions. The tumulus built up above the grave was made of a number of layers of earth, about 20cm thick, separated by thin layers of clay.

The settlement of Tološi is located in the northwest part of the Skadar basin, in a fertile plain, on the outskirts of the city of Podgorica. The archaeological site of Gruda Boljevića is located in the central part of this settlement, nestled among houses. This site got its name from the local word “gruda” (rise, mound) and the fact that it lies on the property of the Boljević family. Older residents remember that there were formerly two or three other such mounds in the vicinity of this one, which, over time, have been totally destroyed. In the local tradition, a legend mentions a meeting and clash between two wedding parties who subsequently buried their dead on this spot. It appears that this belief has helped to preserve at least one of these tumuli up to the present day.

A PRINCELY BURIAL OF THE EARLY BRONZE AGE

The Gruda Boljevića tumulus has an irregular, conical shape, with a diameter of about 24m and a height of about 1.8m. The western part of the mound was slightly damaged recently by the construction of a street and an excavation for an electrical installation. Rectangular building stones were observed on the crest of the mound, which were shown to belong to secondary burials from the medieval period. We carried out the investigation of the mound using the method of opposed segments (quarters of the circular mound), leaving a 1m-wide control profile. In order to better record the location of archaeological finds and data, the investigated surface was divided into a grid of 1 x 1 sq. m. Excavations revealed that the mound had been formed over a central grave, which was dug into the underlying subsoil (conglomerate). The central

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grave consists of a pit of irregular rectangular form, with dimensions of around 1.1 by 0.85m. The pit was dug into a layer of hard, gravelly earth to a depth of about 0.5-0.6m. The base of the pit was found on two levels, so that the eastern half was about 0.1m deeper. In the eastern half of the grave were found small, calcined and badly preserved fragments of the leg bones of a single individual. Although only a small part of the skeleton was preserved, it can be concluded that the deceased was buried in a flexed position, in a west-east orientation.

During the course of excavating this grave pit, a flake of reddish chert was found at a depth of 2.12m from the top of the mound. This is an atypical fragment without any traces of further shaping. Because of this, it is not possible to say whether this is an artefact that was intentionally placed in this grave or a natural flake which was thrown into the grave by chance when it was being filled or during the construction of the mound.

We did not observe any construction above the grave pit but at the level of the base of the mound, that is, the original ground surface, the central grave was edged by a series of small river cobbles. These cobbles were 5-10cm in size and arranged in a C-shaped string along the western edge of the grave pit. After the closing of the grave, the building of the mound started with the deposition of fine, cleaned soil without stones. Approximately every 20cm a 1-3cm thick layer of light yellow clay was laid over the mound fill. These layers, or, better, lenses, are not compact and often do not cover the entire surface of the mound but instead are most frequently sporadic and difficult to see. In the control profiles, we observed six light yellow layers, up to a height of about 1m above the base of the mound. It is hard to say whether these lenses continued up to the top of the mound because the upper layers have been disturbed to a great extent by the digging of graves in the medieval period. We noted these lenses over a surface of about 6-8m in diameter around the centre of the mound.

A group of votive gifts, seemingly deposited in disorder, was found in a layer of loose soil about 0.8m above the central grave pit. This group consists of the following five objects:

1. Hammer-axe (mace), made from fine, polished, green stone (granite). It is perforated vertically with respect to its long axis and the hole for the handle is covered at one end by a small cap. The cap is made of gold sheet, decorated with a hammered and engraved cross inside a double circle. Its length is 18cm and the diameter of the hole of the handle is 2.2cm (*fig. 1*);
2. Pendant (amulet) of trapezoidal shape with gently rounded sides, made from fine, reddish porphyry. This amulet has on its narrower end a finely made perforation for hanging. Length 7.5cm, thickness 0.5cm (*fig. 2*);
3. Dagger: small, badly preserved, triangular, bronze dagger with a two-sided cutting edge, with central thickening creating a deltoid cross-section. Length 10.3cm (*fig. 3*);
- 4-5. Two gold ring-pendants of rhomboid cross-section with one narrow, pointed end and one broader, conical end, of the "nopenning" type. Radii 1.32 x 0.94cm and 1.4 x 0.9cm, weights 1.85g and 1.73g (*fig. 4*);

A second group of offerings, consisting of three ceramic vessels, was found right in the centre of the mound, about 0.6m from the surface. All three vessels were made of a fine, cleaned, polished but poorly fired clay:

1. Plate: a shallow, footed dish, with a projecting rim whose sides angle outward, expanding in a duck bill shape, with two small perforations at the outer angles of the projection. The feet consist of four cylindrical legs which are joined at the bottom by a wide, ring-shaped stand. The vessel is richly decorated both on the interior and exterior with deep incisions and stamping: wider and narrower bands are bordered by bands made with a stamp wheel. Diameter 20cm, height 6.1cm (*fig. 5a-c*).
2. Funnel: a vessel of conical form with a long, cylindrical spout. Like the previous vessel, this one also is richly decorated, on the interior and the exterior, although with some differences in the distribution of the decorative bands. Diameter (rim) 14.1cm, height 18.2cm, diameter (base) 4.2cm (*fig. 6a-c*).

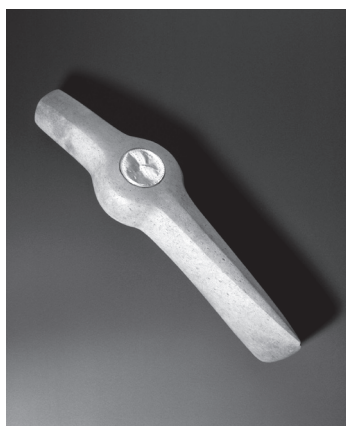


Fig. 1 – Green stone hammer-axe
(photo T. Lauko).



Fig. 2 – Reddish porphyry amulet
(photo T. Lauko).

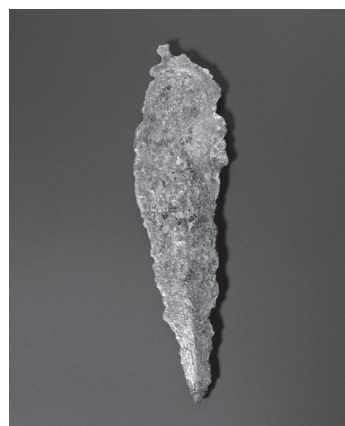


Fig. 3 – Bronze dagger
(photo T. Lauko).



Fig. 4 – Gold earrings (photo T. Lauko).

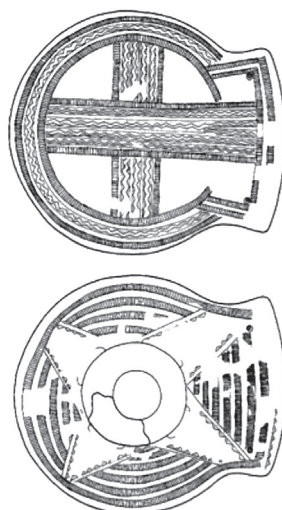


Fig. 5a-c – Incised and stamped shallow footed dish (photo T. Lauko).

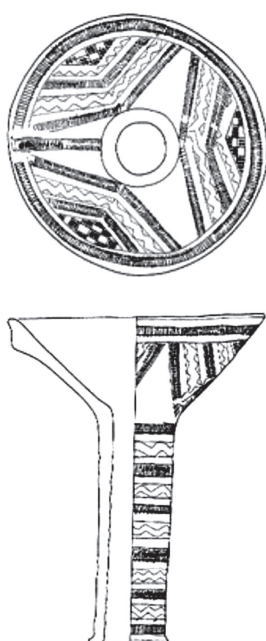


Fig. 6a-c – Incised and stamped funnel (photo T. Lauko).

3. Pitcher-goblet, with one strap handle, high, slightly concave cylindrical neck, a small, slightly biconical body and a flat base. This vessel is decorated with similar ornamentation and in the same techniques as the other two vessels with the exception that the decoration is only on the exterior surface, including the handle. Diameter (rim) 10.5cm, height 22.5cm, diameter (base) 6.4cm (*fig. 7*).

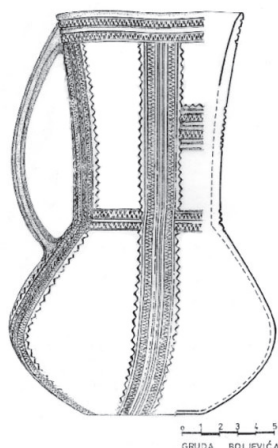


Fig. 7 – Incised and stamped goblet.

The fragments of these vessels were found grouped together in a small area, so that almost all the fragments of the plate and the funnel were recovered, while only some fragments of the goblet were found, although in sufficient number to allow its reconstruction.

The first group of finds, the objects of finely polished stone and metal, probably belonged to the individual buried in the central grave of the mound. It is difficult to determine the origin of these finds. Judging from striking analogies with the sites of Mala Gruda and Steno on the island of Leukas, some items such as the golden hair pendants and the triangular dagger could be of south Adriatic or Aegean origin (Govedarica 1989, p. 185).

The other finds, the hammer-axe and especially the trapezoidal pendant of porphyry, might betray evidence of steppe influences. It will be necessary to carry out chemical analyses to find out the materials these artefacts were made of and to determine more precisely their origins or at least the sources of their raw materials.

Without doubt, though, these items indicate the high social status of the deceased, which legitimates our classification of this mound as one of the so-called “princely” tumuli.

The clay vessels which form the second group of offerings distinguish themselves through their special forms and the outstanding quality of their decoration, which also attest to a very complex burial ritual.

The vessel in the shape of a funnel is, as far as we know, the only find for which we have not succeeded in finding appropriate parallels so far. However, the context of the funnel leads us to interpret it as a device serving for ritual purposes (libation ritual). Indeed, on the spot where the funnel was found we discovered a “negative slope” of yellow clay, identical to the clay lenses laid over the mound in the course of its building up. It looks as if that the funnel was planted in the last layer of clay in a vertical position, so that a burial ritual could be carried out. We got the impression that these vessels were placed in appropriate position when the building of the mound was near to the end so that it could continue after the ritual had been carried out. The breaking of these vessels was probably caused by the pressure of the piled on earth, and not for ritual purposes, as is otherwise often the case.

The second vessel, the dish-plate, is a form which is found at several sites over a relatively narrow area. An almost identical vessel, of the same form and diameter, was found as an offering with the individual buried in the central grave of the tumulus of Velika Gruda (Martinović, Primas 2000, p. 1-7). It is thought that the fragment found in the destroyed tumulus in the settlement of Rubeža near Nikšić came from a vessel of the same shape, that is a footed plate. It is necessary to add here a similar vessel, the reconstructed clay cup found in the tumulus of Mala Gruda. It is somewhat different from the previous vessels, but is at any rate a similar type of vessel. In addition to their closely similar shape, these four vessels are all decorated in a similar manner with the techniques of incision and stamping, including the use of a stamp wheel.

The third vessel, the goblet, somehow resembles the pitcher with one band handle found in the tumulus of Mala Gruda (Parović-Pešikan, Trbuhović 1971, p. 129-143). Some similar characteristics are found on the goblets from the sites of Kënetë (Tumulus IV) and Pazhok in Albania (Govedarica 1989, p. 178-188, T. XLIV/7, T. XLIII/1).

Taking into account the objects presented here and their parallels, the tumulus of Gruda Boljevića must belong to the Adriatic type of the Ljubljana Culture (Dimitrijević 1979, p. 321-324). In a most comprehensive study dealing with the analysis of the Early Bronze Age in the eastern Adriatic area, artefacts similar to the finds from the tumulus of Gruda Boljevića are assigned to the “for now not sufficiently documented southern variant of [the Ljubljana] culture” (Govedarica 1989, p. 187).

It is easier to speak of the period of origin of the tumulus of Gruda Boljevića. Radiocarbon dating of osteological material from the central grave of the tumulus of Velika Gruda has shown that Grave 1 belongs to the period 3081-2886 B.C. (Primas 1996, p. 48). Bearing in mind that Velika Gruda and Gruda Boljevića have yielded identical ceramic dish-plates, it is clear that they could have originated in the same period. The conclusion is that the first burial and the building of the mound of Gruda Boljevića belong to the final Eneolithic, or, better stated, to the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, to which the inventory of material from this tumulus belongs (Marković 2006, p. 184-196).

Apart from the material presented here, the excavation of the Gruda Boljevića mound provided valuable information on the way in which the grave pit was made and the mound was built up, as well as on funerary rituals. In any case, the data from the tumulus of Gruda Boljevića will contribute to a better knowledge of the chronology and the local setting of the material and spiritual culture of the Early Bronze Age in Montenegro and the wider Adriatic area.

A FIND OF THE DEVELOPED BRONZE AGE

A group of fragments of coarse ware was found in the southeast segment of the mound, along the southern profile not far from the base of the tumulus of Gruda Boljevića, in quadrats A5, A6, and A9. These fragments were found at a depth of around 0.3-0.4m from the surface of the tumulus in an area disturbed by the digging of the later, medieval burials. After conservation treatment, we reconstructed, hopefully with success, the vessel to which these fragments belonged. It is a large vessel, with a ball-shaped body, a flat base, a short, gently outcurving neck and a folded rim whose lower edge is decorated with a series of finger impressions. On the shoulder of the vessel, two hornlike protuberances are preserved. Diameter (rim) 33cm, height 34cm, diameter (base) 26cm (*fig. 8*).

On the basis of its shape and decoration, this vessel can be placed chronologically in the period of the second phase of the Dinaric Culture (Govedarica 1989, p. 169-172).

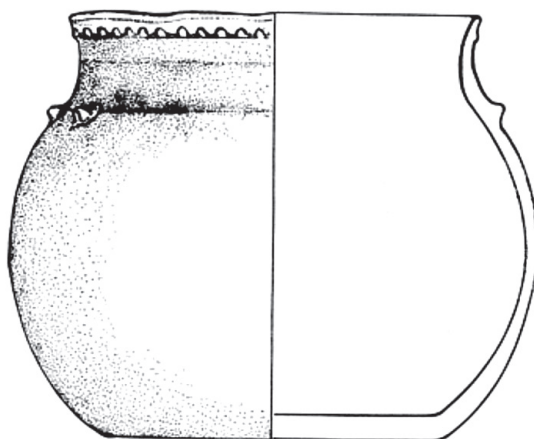


Fig. 8 – Bronze Age coarse ware vessel from Gruda Boljevića.

MEDIEVAL GRAVES

Our investigations have shown that a large necropolis from the medieval period developed over this prehistoric tumulus. The area in which the tumulus of Gruda Boljevića is found is mentioned in historical sources in 1318 as “Luscha giopa” (Luška župa), and in the 15th c. its inhabitants are mentioned as the Luxeni, Luxani (Kovačević 1967, p. 320). Its appropriate location and, perhaps, the awareness that this was a ritual place led the inhabitants of medieval Luška župa to place their cemetery on the tumulus of Gruda Boljevića. An area of around 650 sq. m was investigated, in the course of which 192 medieval graves were discovered. The dead were buried in rows in the Christian manner. The way in which the graves were constructed gives a specific character to this necropolis and until now makes it unique in this area. The dead were buried in a construction made of stone slabs in the form of a double slope roof, and on the surface, around 40cm above the grave, was placed a grave marker in the form of a rectangular construction of unworked stones (*fig. 9-10*).

The grave goods of the medieval necropolis of Gruda Boljevića are modest but representative. On the basis of the artefacts and coins, the necropolis can be dated to the 13th-14th c. (*fig. 11*).



Fig. 9 – Medieval necropolis over the prehistoric tumulus at Gruda Boljevića (photo M. Baković).



Fig. 10 – Idem (photo M. Baković).



Fig. 11 – Jewellery of the 13th-14th c. from the medieval necropolis at Gruda Boljevića (photo T. Lauko).

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THE EARLY BRONZE AGE BURIAL MOUND AT KRIARITSI – SYKIA (CENTRAL MACEDONIA, GREECE)

Sofia ASOUHIDOU *

ABSTRACT

The burial mound is located on a rather low hill (altitude 41.03m), which rises almost perpendicularly above sea level. The burial site lies on a 400 sq. m plateau on the mound's top. The dense layer of crude or semi-crude stones located on the surface of the plateau covered 30 burial enclosures which can be divided into four categories according to their shape: circular, oblique, semi-circular and irregular.

Cists are dug into the burial enclosures: one in most cases, two in some, while in one case there is a double cist.

Cremation is the exclusive burial practice of the burial site. The urns in which the burned bones are gathered are placed in the small burial cists of the enclosures. The cists were first covered by slabs and then by a pile of stones covering the whole enclosure. We have not yet located the cremation places.

The range of vessel shapes is rather limited due to their specific burial use. They are all handmade and can be divided into 3 categories according to their use:

- a. Urns (*amphorae* with four or two handles, *hydriae*, small closed vessels, etc.);
- b. Vessels covering the urns (bell-shaped cups);
- c. Burial offerings (small cups).

Considering the sparse evidence for cremation in the EBA burial sites of Macedonia, the exclusive use of this practice at Kriaritsi makes it a unique example in the wider region, as far as the construction method and in particular the burial practice are concerned.

The burial mound at Kriaritsi, Sykia, was unearthed in April 1997 due to infrastructure works undertaken at a large holiday village.

The Kriaritsi site, which is neither reported nor included in any list of Central Macedonia's prehistoric sites, is located 5km from the modern settlement of Sykia (*fig. 1*). It is quite inaccessible, rocky with a thin layer of surface soil (about 20cm deep), and covered by low bushy vegetation. For this reason, it was very difficult to locate any antiquities until the above-mentioned works started.

A systematic surface survey in the wider region located thirteen new archaeological sites. Five of these sites were excavated and, in addition to the burial mound,¹ remains of an EBA settlement were also brought to light.²

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1. Ασουχίδου *et al.* 1998.

2. Ασουχίδου *et al.* 2000.



Fig. 1 – Map of Chalkidiki (Central Macedonia). The position of Kriaritsi is marked.



Fig. 2 – Aerial view of Kriaritsi.

The burial mound is located on a rather low hill (absolute altitude 41.03m) which rises almost perpendicularly above sea surface and lies on top of a 400 sq. m plateau.

The removal of the natural surface soil revealed a layer of densely packed, mostly crude and semi-crude stones extending throughout the plateau (*fig. 2*). The stone removal brought to light thirty burial enclosures that were covered by stone piles. The enclosures were marked by partially worked or selected semi-crude stones, carefully placed on the natural rock. One course of stones is preserved in the majority of cases but in four cases two courses are present (VII, VIII, IX, XXI). Enclosures VII and XV are constructed in a manner which required special care.

According to their shape, the burial enclosures (*fig. 3*) can be grouped as follows:

- a) circular enclosures, maximum diameter 3.10m (bur. encl. IV), free standing (13 out of 30 examples);
- b) oblique, semi-circular or irregular enclosures connected with the neighbouring ones (the remaining 17).

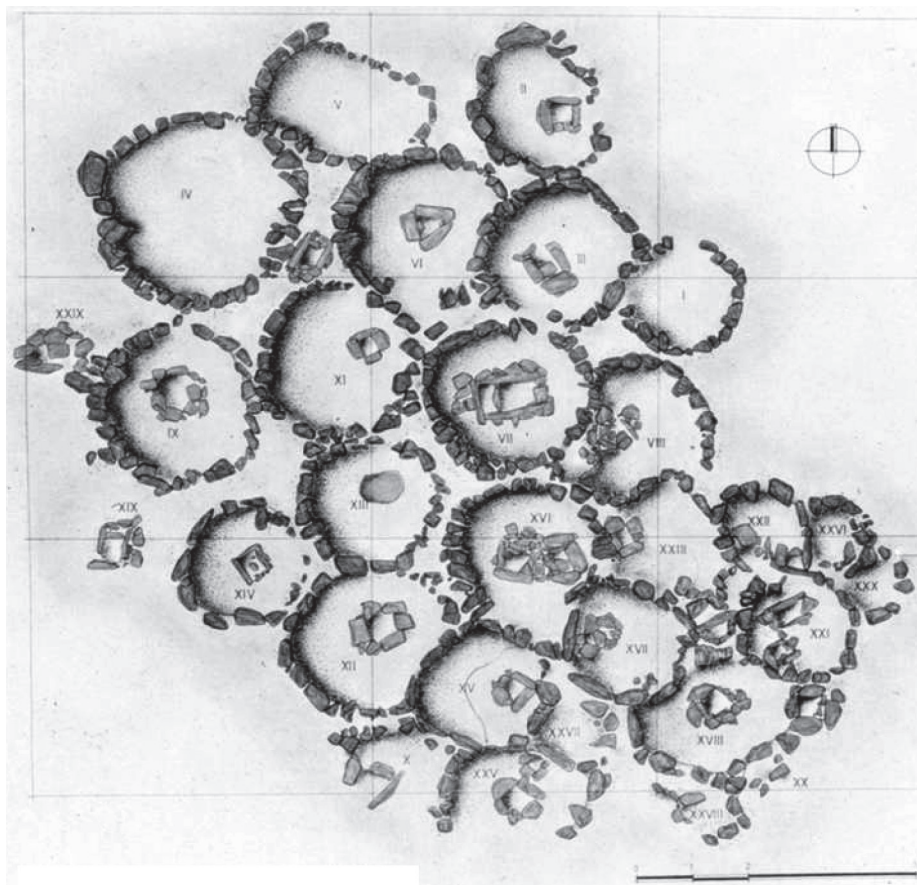


Fig. 3 – Plan of the cemetery.

The largest part of the enclosures to the northern, western and southern side of the mound collapsed due to ground subsidence. Probably for the same reason, the stones of enclosure XXIX, of which only a burial cist was preserved, had disappeared completely.

The cists were dug into the burial enclosures; one in most cases, two in some, while in the case of enclosure VII the cist is double. The shapes of the burial cists fall into four groups: triangular, square, rectangle and erratic (Enclosures VIII cist 2, enclosures XIII cist 1).

Cremation is the exclusive burial practice of the site. The urns in which the burnt bones had been gathered are placed in small burial cists, within the enclosures which were built on the natural rock or, in a few cases, between the enclosures. The cists were first covered by slabs and then a pile of stones probably resembling a mound covering the whole enclosure. We have not yet located the cremation places.

Ten of the burial enclosures were found intact and offered a complete picture of the local burial practices, unlike the remaining twenty others enclosures which were disturbed:

a) the urns in the cist of enclosures XVIII, XXIII and XXIV were placed vertically, while an upside down vessel covered their top;

b) the urns of the enclosures XXI, XXII and XXV which included a second cist were found placed in the same way;

c) the enclosures I, XI and XII are individual cases. The four urns of enclosure I were placed one next to the other on the natural rock. The urn of enclosure XI was found in a cist in horizontal position (*fig. 4*), without any covering vessel. Finally, the urn of enclosure XIII was placed into a shallow hollow carved in the natural rock.



Fig. 4 – The urn of enclosure XI placed horizontally.

The urns that were accompanied by burial offerings are very few. Smaller vessels such as bowls and cups were found inside and outside the burial enclosures (XII, XIII, XVIII and XXV), while clay spindle whorls and a few stone tools, mainly in flint, were found in disturbed burials.

The range of vessel shapes is rather limited due to their specific burial use. They are all handmade and can be divided according to their use in three categories:

A) Urns: *amphorae* with four or two handles, a pithoid jar with a wide mouth, a hydria and small closed vessels.

Parallels to the urns were found in the following chronological phases: a) **for the hydriae**, in phases Ib and II at Troy,³ phases 3 and 5 at Pefkakia in Thessaly,⁴ and in the blue period of Poliochni;⁵ b) **for the two handled *amphorae* and the pithoid jar**, in layers III to VI of Kritsana,⁶ in phases IIg at Troy,⁷ in phase 7 at Pefkakia in Thessaly,⁸ and in the blue period of Poliochni;⁹ c) the closed vessels recall similar vessels in the Cyclades,¹⁰ in Agios Mamas in Central Macedonia,¹¹ and in phase III at Troy.¹²

B) Vessels covering the urn: a) bowls and b) bell-shaped cups.

a) Bowls are among the most common types of vessels in the Balkans, Anatolia and Central Macedonia. Chronological parallels are found in layers IV and V of Kritsana,¹³ in phase I at Troy,¹⁴ in the green period of Poliochni,¹⁵ as well as in the EBA layers of Ezero.¹⁶

b) Bell-shaped cups similar to those of Kriaritsi are also found in phase III of Troy.¹⁷

3. Blegen *et al.* 1950, pl. 236, no. 27; pl. 370b, C15.

4. Christmann 1996, pl. 14.2, 36.1.

5. Bernabò Brea 1964, p. 622, pl. CXXIV, fig. e.

6. Heurtley 1939, p. 171, pl. 177.

7. Blegen *et al.* 1950, pl. 392-394.

8. Christmann 1996, p. 29-35, pl. 85, fig. 10; pl. XVIII, fig. 6.

9. Bernabò Brea 1964, p. 50, 61, 571, pl. LIIIb.

10. Barber 1994, p. 90-91, fig. 58, no. 7.

11. Παππά 1992, p. 476, fig. 3.

12. Blegen *et al.* 1951, pl. 45b, C28.

13. Aslanis 1985, p. 321-330, pl. 95, fig. 11; pl. 100, fig. 3.

14. Blegen *et al.* 1950, pl. 223 α A 12, 225, 258-261.

15. Bernabò Brea 1964, p. 614, pl. CXI, fig. d.

16. Georgiev *et al.* 1979, p. 246, 324.

17. Blegen *et al.* 1951, pl. 60, no. III-94.

C) Burial offerings: small cups with a spherical or conical body and a projecting handle. A spouted two-handled cup is unique. Similar cups are found in layer 22b of Kastanas,¹⁸ in phase Vb of Sitagroi,¹⁹ and in the blue period of Poliochni.²⁰

Therefore the burial mound at Kriaritsi can be dated to the transition between the middle and the late phase of the Early Bronze Age, according to the dated pottery²¹ of central and eastern Macedonia, Thessaly, the north eastern Aegean and the coastline of Asia Minor.

Considering the sparse occurrences of cremation identified in the EBA burial sites of Macedonia, the exclusive use of this practice at Kriaritsi makes it a unique example in the wider region. As regards the construction method, the only other example is the cemetery that was recently excavated (2007) at N. Skioni in Chalkidiki.²²

The development of the Kriaritsi cemetery had additional characteristics. The circular enclosures were, in all likelihood, the initial centre around which the oblique, semi-circular or irregular enclosures were attached. The burials found between enclosures were probably there due to limited space. At the beginning, the cemetery probably consisted of low, small, mound-like burials, formed by the covering of individual enclosures with stone piles. It gradually took on the form of a single large mound when one big stone pile covered the neighbouring enclosures and the open spaces between them.

The **practice of cremation** which has been known in the Helladic region since the Neolithic period appears only occasionally during the Bronze Age.²³ Archaeological research has located some Early Bronze Age cremation burials in Macedonia, northern Greece (Agios Mamas in Chalkidiki,²⁴ N. Skioni in Chalkidiki,²⁵ Xeropigado-Koilada in Kozani²⁶), and the Ionian Islands in western Greece (Lefkada).²⁷

Cremation burials were found in western Serbia, in the tombs of the Belotic-Bela Crkva²⁸ cultural groups (sites: Sumar in Belotic and Bandera-Cerik in Bela Crkva), in north eastern Bulgaria, at Trnava and Kalugeric,²⁹ and last in the most ancient urn cemetery at Gedikli-Hüyük in Asia Minor,³⁰ at the foot of mount Tavros.

During the Middle Bronze Age, cremation burials were deposited in the site of Tourla Gouloi Kozani³¹ in northern Greece, in the tombs of the cultural groups Dubovac-Žuto-Brdo³² in northern Serbia (in Korbovo) and in Asia Minor in Kara Hüyük³³ on the plateau of Ikonio.

During the Late Bronze Age, the practice of cremation is known in the tombs of Potamoi and Exohi (Drama),³⁴ in the Tsiganadika cemetery of Kastri on Thassos,³⁵ in Prosymna,³⁶ Perati in Attica³⁷ (eighteen cremation burials)³⁸ and finally in Ialysos on the island of Rhodes³⁹ (nine burial cremations similar to those at Perati, among common inhumations).

18. Aslanis 1985, p. 321-330, pl. 57, fig. 14; pl. 86, fig. 8.

19. Sherratt 1986, p. 437, pl. XCIV, no. 18, fig. 13.20, no. 14.

20. Bernabò Brea 1964, p. 263, 543, 565, pl. XL.

21. Coleman 1992, p. 247-279, fig. 2.

22. *AEMΘ* 17 (2003), p. 369-372; *AEMΘ* 18 (2004), p. 149-155.

23. Ασουχίδου 2001, p. 31-46.

24. *AEMΘ* 15 (2001), p. 475-478.

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27. Dörpfeld 1927, p. 217-250.

28. Garašanin 1958; Garašanin 1973, p. 267-268; Garašanin 1982, p. 172-174.

29. Panayotov 1989, p. 17-19 and 22-23.

30. *AJA* 69 (1965), p. 139-140; *AJA* 70 (1966), p. 147, 280; *AJA* 71 (1967), p. 162; *AJA* 72 (1968), p. 133; *Belleten* 30 (1966), p. 42-47, 55.

31. Χονδρογιάννη-Μετόκη 1998, p. 291-292.

32. Garašanin 1973, p. 340-341; Krstić 1953, p. 19-26.

33. *AJA* 60 (1956), p. 373, *AJA* 62 (1958), p. 95; *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* 6/1 (1956), p. 35; *Orientalia N.S.* 25 (1956), p. 84.

34. *AE* 1979 (Χρονικά), p. 26-71.

35. Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1992, p. 163-170, 177-180, 272-273, 371-372.

36. Blegen 1937, p. 143, 242.

37. Ιακωβίδη 1969, τόμ. Β, p. 31-37.

38. Ιακωβίδη 1969, τόμ. Β1969, τόμ. Β, p. 32, note 1.

39. Maiuri 1923/1924, p. 63, 118, 129, 172, 176, 182, 189, 238-241; Jacopi 1930/1931, p. 254, 285, 329.

Cremation burials were found in cemeteries of the cultural groups Donja-Brcjica and Gornja Stražava in Yugoslavia (cremations in urns only),⁴⁰ which can be considered to be the cultural continuity of the urn cemeteries of the Middle and Late Bronze Age (Vatina and Dubovac-Žuto-Brdo groups) at Orsoj⁴¹ near the Danube (exclusively cremations in urns, two hundred and twenty burials), and finally in the cemetery of Troy, phase VI (over two hundred urns).⁴²

The frequency of cremation burials increased at the end of the Mycenaean period (Perati, Dodecanese, Crete) and, in a way, responded to influences from the Near East, where this custom continued since the EBA without interruptions.⁴³ According to alternative views, the reappearance of cremation as a burial practice is related to the arrival of new tribes from the north during the LBA, which would have caused the downfall of the Mycenaean world.⁴⁴

Cremation, as the exclusive burial practice in the Kriaritsi mound (EBA), appears to be a dynamic innovation which replaced the older practice of inhumation or else was the result of external influences. It is a fact, in any case, that the practice of cremation also continued in the wider region through the Iron Age, as is indicated by the excavation of the Koukos Sykia cemetery (ninety eight burial cremations),⁴⁵ and the cemetery of Toroni (one hundred and eighteen burial cremations and sixteen plane inhumations).⁴⁶

As regards the construction method, the Kriaritsi EBA burial mound may be said to share similarities with those excavated at N. Skioni, Chalkidiki, and on Lefkada. Stone enclosures, like those of Kriaritsi, were found in cemeteries of the LBA period, for example at Gornja Stražava⁴⁷ in the cultural group Donja-Brcjica in Yugoslavia, and in the Early Iron Age cemetery at Gynaikokastro, Kilkis.⁴⁸

An interesting common characteristic of the Kriaritsi, Potamoi and Exohi Drama, and Gynaikokastro Kilkis burial mounds (although they belong to different chronological periods) is the combination of urns and burial mounds. These burial mounds are characterized by a tendency towards megalithism, which probably comes from the “Dolmen” influence (south eastern Bulgaria and Thrace), or from the mountainous character of the region, due to the availability of raw material (stones). Specifically in Kriaritsi, it was more convenient to cover the burial enclosures with stone piles, considering the fact that the semi-mountainous setting provided very little soil or clay.

The results of the anthropological study of the material⁴⁹ indicate free use of the cemetery, both for adults and underage individuals of both sexes, which probably means that the tombs were used by family groups. The layout of the cemetery also reveals a degree of social coherence (kinship relations). Despite the lack of space, caring for the maintenance of older burials reveals a deep respect for the dead and the life after death. The unchanged burial practices and building method throughout the life span of the cemetery probably indicate that no substantial changes occurred in this small society. The forty individuals that were found in the cemetery are related to the EBA settlement which lies 500m to the north on a hill close to the sea. The settlement occupied an area of approximately 1000 sq. m and the main occupation of its inhabitants must have been stockbreeding.

In conclusion, it is obvious that the burial practice of cremation as well as the construction method of the cemeteries in Macedonia during the Bronze Age take place among a wide range of cultural groups that are known to have existed in the Balkans. They are clearly good candidates for future research projects.

40. Garašanin 1983, p. 773-778; Garašanin 1973, p. 640-641.

41. Filipov 1974, p. 12-22.

42. Blegen *et al.* 1953, p. 370-379.

43. Andronikos 1968; Ιακωβίδης 1970, p. 31; Θέμελης 1973, p. 356-364.

44. Θέμελης 1973, p. 356 *sq.*

45. *AEMΘ* 1 (1987), p. 284-285; *AEMΘ* 2 (1988), p. 357-365; *AEMΘ* 3 (1989), p. 425-433; *AEMΘ* 4 (1990), p. 439-454.

46. Papadopoulos 1988, p. 26 (Catalogue nos. 108-114); *IIAE* 1984, p. 44-50; Έργον 1984, p. 26-28; *IIAE* 1982, p. 73-77; Έργον 1982, p. 26-27; *IIAE* 1981, p. 38; Έργον 1981, p. 17-18; Cambitoglou, Papadopoulos 1988.

47. *Zbornik Narodnog Muzeja* 14, 1 (1991), p. 231-243.

48. *AEMΘ* 1 (1987), p. 305-306, fig. 2-4; *AEMΘ* 2 (1988), p. 219-220.

49. Τριανταφύλλου 2004.

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BRONZE AGE TUMULI AND GRAVE CIRCLES IN CENTRAL GREECE

THE CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

Maria-Photini PAPAKONSTANTINOU *

ABSTRACT

Bronze Age tumuli are rare in Central Greece, as they are in the rest of the Greek mainland. They appear at Thebes by the end of the EH II period. Most of the tumuli within the area under study belong to the mature and late phases of MH or to the transition from the MH to LH period and only a restricted number are later.

Until recently, the excavation or localizing of tumuli in thirteen different places in Central Greece and Thessaly had been reported. These tumuli, thirty in number, consist of a non-homogeneous group with different as well as common features regarding their construction principles, distribution, relationship with other kinds of cemeteries, types of graves, burial customs, grave goods and their use and chronology.

In this paper the results of recent unpublished excavations as well as re-considerations of old publications are presented. Furthermore, the comparative study of the specimens of the group aims to reveal their common features and each one's particularities, through an integrative presentation of the material at our disposal.

The tumuli¹ were simple but impressive structures, built to mark an important grave or a group of graves of members of the same family or of the same social group.

The tumulus is the oldest monumental burial structure in the Greek Mainland, whose presence has been associated with the radical changes of the end of the EH period,² as well as with the "kurgan tradition".³ In Greece, we can not talk about a "civilization of tumuli", as for example in south Russia, the Balkans and Europe, in spite of their increasing number with the progress of research.

Tumuli appear at the end of the EH II period (Leukas⁴ and Thebes⁵) and at the beginning of the EH III in the Northern Peloponnese (Lerna⁶ and Olympia⁷). Their number increases impressively during the MH

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1. Pelon 1976; Müller 1989.
2. Müller 1989, p. 1, 35.
3. Müller 1989, p. 4; Forsén 1992, p. 18-19.
4. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 86.
5. Spyropoulos 1981; Müller 1989, p. 18-19; Forsén 1992, p. 133-134, 232-233; *AD* 51 (1996), B1, p. 259-261; *AD* 52 (1997), B1, p. 353-359. *AD* 53 (1998), B1, p. 323-327. Aravantinos, Psaraki in this volume.
6. Müller 1989, p. 19-20; Forsén 1992, p. 36-37, 232-233; Wiencke 2000, p. 297-298.
7. Müller 1989, p. 16-18; Kyrieleis 1990, p. 177-188; Forsén 1992, p. 88, 92, 233.

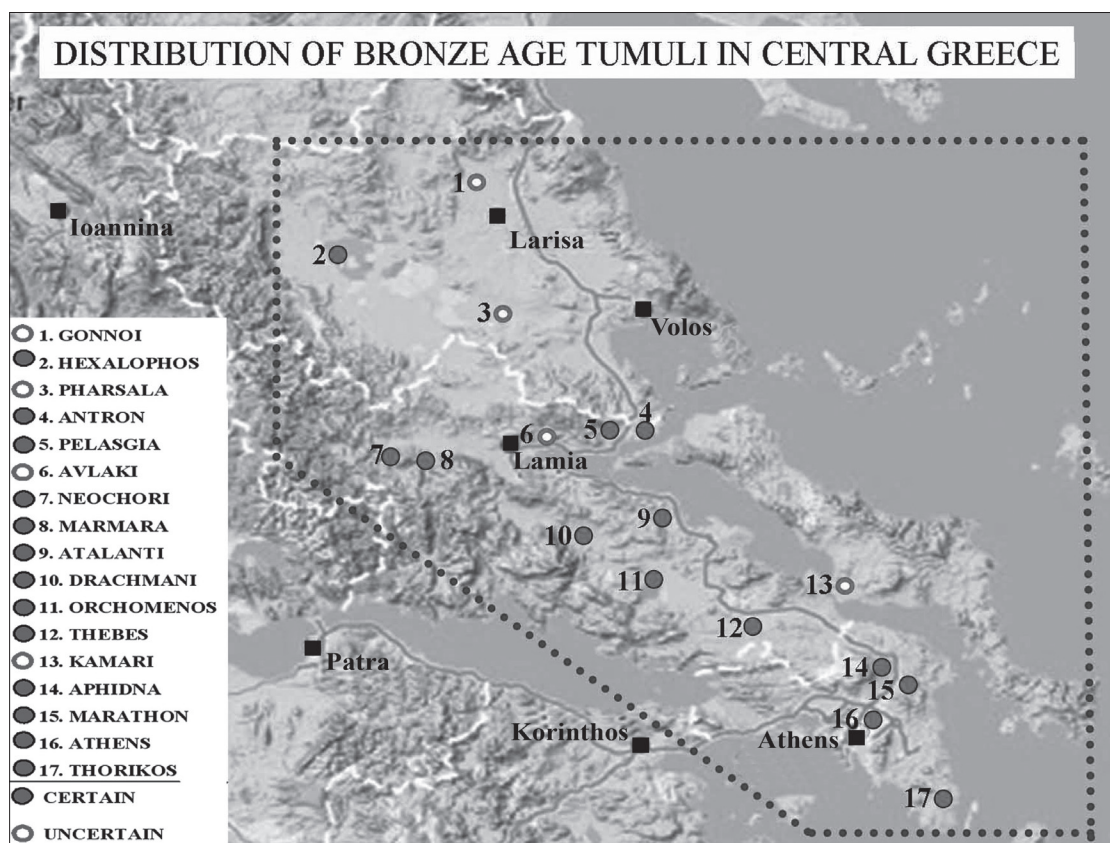


Fig. 1 – Distribution of Bronze Age Tumuli and Grave Circles in Central Greece.

and the early phases of the LH period. They are rare during the mature LH phases and spread into northern Greece in LH IIIC.⁸ The recent excavation of the EH II tumulus cemetery at Kriaritsi in Chalkidiki⁹ and of the MH-Early LH tumuli at Pighi Athinas and Valtos Leptokaryas in the region of Macedonian Olympus,¹⁰ shed some more light on the question of their chronological distribution and the manner of their introduction into southern Greece.

Focusing on the area under study (*fig. 1*), what is first observed is the density of the distribution of tumuli in the eastern part of central Greece (Sterea Hellas), as opposed to Thessaly. The rarity of tumuli in Thessaly, as well as in Macedonia, can be explained – if other reasons are excluded – on the base of geomorphology. Specifically, the vast plains do not favour the preservation of this kind of monument.

The only secure Bronze Age tumulus in Thessaly is the tumulus at Hexalophos,¹¹ associated with the group of northern Greek tumuli of the LH IIIC period. The mound has been partially excavated and two cists have been revealed, one of them considered to be the central grave of the tumulus.

Moving south to Phthiotis, the concentration of a large number of tumuli sites – as numerous as in the rest of eastern central Greece – is to be noticed. It is important that, except Drachmani, all the other sites have been excavated during the last twenty years. Three of them, Pelasgia, Neochori and Atalanti, which have been recently explored, have not yet been published and are presented, in a preliminary form, at this conference.

8. Müller 1989, p. 24.

9. AD 53 (1998), B, p. 582-584; Asouhidou *et al.* 1998; Asouhidou, this volume.

10. Poulaki-Pandermali 2005, p. 460-462; Poulaki-Pandermali 2007a; Poulaki-Pandermali 2007b.

11. AD 23 (1968), B, p. 263-265; Theodoris 1968.

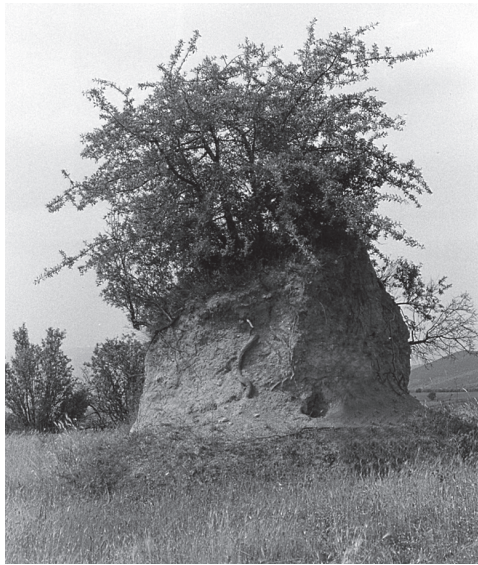


Fig. 2a – Pelasgia Tumulus. The preserved part of the tumulus before the excavation.



Fig. 2b – Dry-stone construction containing a thick layer of ash.



Fig. 2c – Fragmentary Grey Minyan goblet from the surrounding area.

The grave circles of Antron¹² were constructed at the end of the MH-LH I period and continued to be in use until LH IIA. In the Early Christian period, later burial activities on the site disturbed their fill and destroyed any evidence for the height of the supposed mound. For that reason they are called grave circles. The graves, ten in Grave Circle A and eight in Grave Circle B, are cists of small dimensions, set in a radial arrangement.

The two beaked matt-painted jugs of Cycladic influence from the tumulus at Pelasgia¹³ are well-known in the bibliography. They

have been dated to the early phase of the MH period and have been recently assigned to the “mature style”. They are compared with vases of Phase 6 from Pefkakia.¹⁴ The fill of the mound was buff hard earth with some pebbles and mudbrick (*fig. 2a*). The excavation of the preserved part of the tumulus and the surrounding area (*fig. 2c*)¹⁵ brought to light a dry-stone construction containing a thick layer of ash (*fig. 2b*). The shape of the structure, in the vicinity of the tumulus, and the traces of fire recall the so-called horseshoe-shaped structures of ritual significance found in several tumuli sites.¹⁶ It could have been built in connection with a possible central grave and used in religious or funerary ceremonies.¹⁷

12. Papakonstantinou 1999a; Papakonstantinou 1999b.

13. *AD* 25 (1970), B, p. 243-244; Spyropoulos 1972.

14. Maran 1992, p. 278-279.

15. *AD* 53 (1998), B2, p. 393-394; *AD* 54 (1999), B forthcoming; *AD* 55 (2000), B, p. 248-249; *AD* 56 (2001), B forthcoming; *AD* 57 (2002), B forthcoming; *AD* 58 (2003), B forthcoming; *AD* 59 (2004), B forthcoming.

16. Hielte-Stavropoulou 2001, p. 103-112.

17. Hägg 1997; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1990, p. 82.

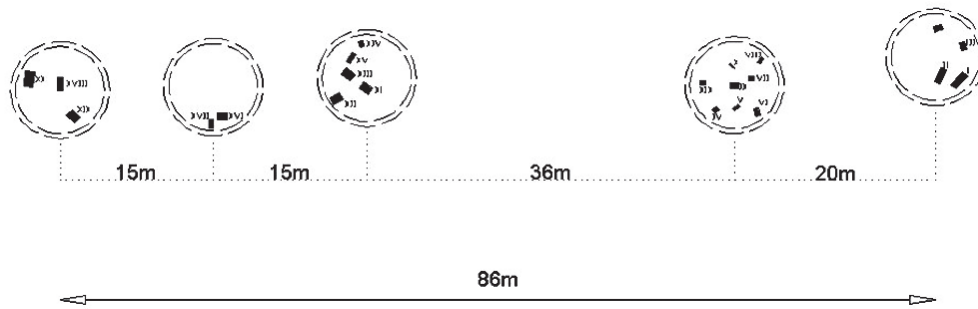


Fig. 3a – Mount Oeta, Neochori. Five groups of cist graves of small dimensions.



Fig. 3b – Tumulus or Grave Circle B.

Recent excavations at Neochori, on mount Oeta,¹⁸ revealed five groups of cist graves of small dimensions, each-one containing three to seven graves (*fig. 3a*). Taking into account the radial arrangement of some of the graves and the neighbouring tumuli site at Marmara, it could be argued that some of them at least were originally tumuli or grave circles (*fig. 3b*). The thinness of the layer of earth fill, due to erosion and weather conditions at the altitude of 1300m, has eliminated any trace of a possible mound or enclosure. Sixteen of the twenty-four graves, most of them plundered, did not contain grave-goods. One of the graves yielded significant offerings, indicating the status of the dead. A preliminary examination of the material reveals that the use of the cemetery extended from the Shaft-Grave period down to the Protogeometric period (*fig. 3c*). This can be explained by the fact that the cemetery was not related to a settlement but was used, as today, by people moving temporarily with their animals from the plain to the mountain.

At Marmara,¹⁹ nine tumuli were explored in different places on a plateau of west Oeta leading from the Spercheios valley towards Doris and Aetolia. The tumuli consisted of a kernel of natural rock which had been slightly rearranged in order to be used as a family burial monument. They contained mainly

18. AD 59, B (2004) forthcoming.

19. Dakoronia 1987.



Fig. 3c – Shaft-Grave period loop-handled jar from cist-grave II and the PG small amphora from cist-grave XIX.



Fig. 4a – Atalanti Tumulus. Aerial photo.



Fig. 4b – Rim handled tankard from the pithos burial.

cist-graves of small dimensions arranged radially round the centre of each tumulus. They were dated by the excavator to the Sub-Mycenaean period and, more recently, to the Shaft-Graves period, on the grounds of the chronology of the most significant vases and their interconnections.

An unexpected find under the foundation of a building complex of Hellenistic-Roman date was an EH III tumulus which was uncovered at Atalanti.²⁰ The enclosure is constructed from large untreated stones and the fill of earth and smaller stones (fig. 4a). The estimated diameter is 15m. Only a quarter of the tumulus has been excavated since the rest has been partially destroyed by later constructions or lies under the modern road. At the centre of the circle a *pithos* (storage jar) burial was found, whereas the trace of a second one lay at the north-western part of its periphery. The *pithos* contained skeletal remains and three vases (fig. 4b), two of them with decoration of light on dark (or Ayia Marina) style.

In 1905 Sotiriadis excavated, not far away from the area of ancient Elateia, a conical tumulus of small diameter known in bibliography as the tumulus of Drachmani.²¹ At the upper level there was a skeleton and a

20. AD 60, B (2005) forthcoming; AD 61, B (2006), forthcoming.

21. PAE 1906, p. 142-144; Dickinson 1977, p. 34, 97-98; Müller 1989, p. 22; Maran 1992, p. 313, n. 987; Forsén 1992, p. 150-151.

large vase with matt-painted decoration. Under a pile of stones and an ash layer there was a grave, probably a pit, with a skeleton in contracted position, along with unusually rich grave-goods. Plausible evidence for funeral rites (ashes and burnt grains) comes from a small pit, which was, however, not precisely located. The tumulus has been dated to the early MH period.

A few years earlier, the excavation of the tumulus of Orchomenos did not yield any evidence indicating the original burial use of the mound.²² The cone, its height being 5m and its diameter 6m at the time of the excavation, consisted of one layer of earth and a core of big stones. Below the stones there was an ash layer with animal bones, suggesting the ritual purpose of the structure, which should probably be dated to the LH III period.

The EH II mudbrick tumulus on the Ampheion hill²³ and one more mudbrick tumulus of the same period found recently on the neighbouring hill of the plot next to the Archaeological Museum at Thebes,²⁴ which covered the remains of an apsidal building and a mass burial, have been related to the relevant structures from Lerna and Altis in Olympia. At the moment, there is no reason for further discussion of this material since the excavators – V. Aravantinos and K. Psaraki, the most suitable people to talk about it – are contributing to this publication.

In Attica four Bronze Age tumuli sites are reported. Two of them, at Athens and Aphidna, were excavated at the end of the nineteenth century and the other two (at Vrana and Thorikos) in the early seventies.

The tumulus of Athens, of an uncertain date, lies on the south slope of the Acropolis hill, between the Asklepion and the Odeion of Herodes Atticus.²⁵ It was a small rectangular mound covered with mudbrick or clay. Six bodies were buried in a contracted position at two levels, separated by an ash layer. A similar layer was also found on the bodies of the upper level.

The tumulus of Aphidna included thirteen graves of different types, shaft-graves or pit-graves, cists and *pithoi* in horizontal position.²⁶ Grave XIII is the richest and is thought to be the central one. The grave contained burnt bones; traces of fire were found below it. The material had been dated to the early MH period but recently an EH date has been proposed.²⁷

At the western extremity of the Vrana valley, next to the Archaeological Museum of Marathon, four tumuli, constructed in the MH-LH III B period, have been explored.²⁸ Their shape is the same: a circular, shield-like mound of soil filled with earth and stones and encircled by a ring of flat stones. The tumuli at Vrana are listed among the most interesting Bronze Age structures and have been compared by their excavator, Spyridon Marinatos, with the tumuli of Albania.²⁹ Recently, one more tumulus was excavated at Tsepi in the area of Marathon.³⁰

On the saddle of the Velaturi Mount at Thorikos, in front of the oblong tholos, a dry-built enclosure of irregular shape was found and, in front of it, a rectangular structure, used possibly for performing rituals.³¹ The enclosure included a large central pit which was carved into the schist, containing the burial in a cist lined with slabs. This was probably a royal tomb but it had been thoroughly plundered. The grave is surrounded by a rectangular megaron-like structure of the original use of the tumulus, which was covered by a stone layer. The tumulus is dated to the end of the MH or at the transition from the MH to the LH I phase.

22. *PAE* 1903, p. 41; *PAE* 1904, p. 35-39; *PAE* 1907, p. 10; *AM* 30 (1905), p. 129-132; Müller 1989, p. 30.

23. Spyropoulos 1981; Müller 1989, p. 18-19; Forsén 1992, p. 232-233; Aravantinos, Psaraki in this volume.

24. *AD* 51 (1996), B, p. 259-261; *AD* 52 (1997), B, p. 353-359; *AD* 53 (1998), B, p. 323-327.

25. *EA* 1902, p. 124-130; Müller 1989, p. 22; Forsén 1992, p. 111.

26. *AM* 21 (1896), p. 338-402; Dickinson 1977, p. 34, 95-99; Müller 1989, p. 2; Maran 1992, p. 319-332; Hielte-Stavropoulou, Wedde 2002.

27. Forsén 2010, p. 223-234.

28. *PAE* 1970, p. 9-18; *Ergon* 1970, p. 7-11; *AAA* 3 (1970), p. 63-68; Müller 1989, p. 23; Maran 1992, p. 320-322.

29. Marinatos 1972, p. 190.

30. *BCH* 127/2 (2003), p. 718.

31. Mussche *et al.* 1984, p. 61-67.

Bronze Age tumuli are rare in Central Greece, as they are in the rest of the Greek mainland. These tumuli,³² in thirteen sites, are a non-homogeneous group with different, as well as common, features, regarding their construction principles, distribution, relationship with other kinds of cemeteries, types of grave, burial customs, grave-goods, and their use and chronology.

The oldest tumuli are the ones at Thebes, of EH II date. The recently discovered tumulus at Atalanti follows, offering one rare EH specimen dated to the EH III. Most of the tumuli within the study area, as is typical of the Greek mainland in general, belong to the mature and late phases of the MH or to the transition from MH to LH I-II and only a limited number are later.

With regard to their function, two different types are distinguished by Forsén, the burial and the ritual tumuli.³³ Within the area studied, the tumuli at Pelasgia and at Orchomenos have not provided direct evidence for burial use. The tumulus at the plot next to the Archaeological Museum of Thebes covered an apsidal building but also a mass burial. Finally, the Ampheion tumulus, according to the results of very recent excavations,³⁴ was connected to an adjacent EH cemetery.

Traces of burial rites³⁵ are reported from different sites, such as the tumuli at Athens, Drachmani, Aphidna and Hexalophos. On the other hand, there are structures or installations related to funeral ceremonies at Pelasgia, Drachmani, Ampheion and Vrana.

Most of the Bronze Age types of graves known from other cemeteries are found in the tumuli. There is neither a special type of grave which has been placed exclusively in that kind of burial monument, nor a predominant type for each area, with the exception of the tumuli in the region of Phthiotis where the great majority of the graves are cists of small dimensions. This is a popular type of grave in Thessaly as a whole during the MH period. The types of grave most frequently found include different types of cists, pits and large *pithoi*. *Pithoi* for burials are used only in EH and early MH complexes (Atalanti and Aphidna). They are usually repaired, large, household vessels in secondary use.

Normally the Central Greek tumuli contained several burials, sometimes arranged around a central grave. There are graves placed in the core of the tumulus and others placed in the fill. The enclosure delimits the graveyard and retains the pile of earth when required. There are tumuli without an enclosure, tumuli with an enclosure built of worked stones (Marathon, Marmara) and enclosures of a single row of stones (Aphidna, Antron). With respect to their plan, the enclosures are circular, irregular (Thorikos, Vrana) or semi-circular (Antron).

Some of the tumuli are isolated and others belong to tumuli cemeteries. Besides, the possibility can not be excluded that tumuli known as isolated had initially been part of tumuli cemeteries that have not been preserved or have not been located.

Most of the tumuli are situated on mountains and hills – either on the top or on a slope – and also at the extremities of valleys or plains. There is an excellent view from the tumuli sites on the summits of mountains and hills (such as Thorikos, Pelasgia and Antron). The privileged place of the tumuli is perhaps related to the religious beliefs of the era.³⁶

The composition of the mound varies, but, in general, it consisted of earth (Aphidna, Marmara, Antron), earth and a pile of stones for the protection of the burial (Drachmani) or earth and a layer of stones for the reinforcement of the stability of the fill (Hexalophos). Alternatives included earth covered with pebbles (Vrana), a pile of stones (Thorikos), crude brick (Athens, Pelasgia), or mudbrick (Thebes). The height varies too, usually 1-3m. Tumuli of the conical type seem to be the highest (Drachmani, Orchomenos). Many tumuli have the appearance of a modest mound (Vrana), while others have been constructed after the slight arrangement of a kernel of natural rock. The diameter more frequently ranges between 10 and 20m.

32. Only the certain tumuli within the study area are discussed in this paper. The tumuli mentioned at Vardates, Styrphaka, and Pera Malacha (see catalogue in Müller 1989, p. 38, nos. 50, 52 and 57) must not be included in this group of burial monuments according to recent investigations, so they have not been marked on the map. Nos. 48 (Kamari), 55 (Gonnoi) and 56 (Pharsala) are of uncertain date and no. 53 at Kastraki (Avlaki) has not been excavated.

33. Forsén 1992, p. 232-233.

34. AD 62, B (2007) forthcoming; Aravantinos, Psaraki in this volume.

35. Nordquist 1990, p. 39-40.

36. Hägg 1997, p. 13-18.

Most of the graves found in the tumuli contained one skeleton in contracted position. Normally they hold poor burials or burials of more ordinary status. Elite burials (Amphion, Thorikos, Drachmani, Aphidna III, Vrana II, Hexalophos) are distinguished by the position of the grave within the tumulus, sometimes by its construction, as well as by the grave-goods, which indicate the social and economic status of the dead.

The full publication of the material above mentioned and the completion of the excavations in some of the tumuli will contribute to their systematic study and our better understanding of their significance.

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MOUNDS OVER DWELLINGS

THE TRANSFORMATION OF DOMESTIC SPACES INTO COMMUNITY MONUMENTS IN EH II THEBES, GREECE

Vassilis ARAVANTINOS *, Kyriaki PSARAKI **

ABSTRACT

Recent excavations by the Greek Archaeological Service carried out in the town of Thebes, Boeotia, clarified matters concerning the building features, the chronology and the function of the Early Helladic mudbrick tumuli. To date, two tumuli have been excavated. The tumulus on “Ampheion” hill, first excavated at the beginnings of the 70s, is associated with an underlying EH II cemetery. A second one, excavated in the plot adjacent to the Thebes Archaeological Museum, covered an apsidal building and a mass burial. The existence of two EH tumuli on the same site and in close proximity offers the possibility of extending our inquiry into the various functions of these constructions and the social structures responsible for the erection of such conspicuous earthworks. In particular, the interment of an EH building under a mound is an additional example of a practice attested at some Peloponnesian sites. In these cases the domestic space was transformed into a community monument.

INTRODUCTION

For the prehistoric societies of the Aegean world, the interval between the end of EH II and the beginning of EH III is one of gradual changes in social and economic organization.¹ One of the features of particular interest in the discussion as to whether external or internal factors were responsible for the cultural changes in this period is the appearance of mounds and/or tumuli.² So far, four mounds and two clusters of tumuli have been revealed in Greece. Three of the mounds are dated to the end of EH II, and/or at the very beginning of EH III, and one is dated some time earlier, probably in the middle of the EH II period. The earliest mound, which is presented in this paper, is a funerary mudbrick cone erected on the top of the so-called “Ampheion” hill at Thebes, in the region of Boeotia, central Greece.³ At Lerna, in the Argolid, in the northeast Peloponnese, a round mound constructed of the debris of

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1. Renfrew 1972; Wiencke 1989; Forsén 1992; Alram-Stern 2004.

2. Müller 1989; Forsén 1992, p. 232.

3. Κεραμόπουλλος 1917, p. 384-386; Σπυρόπουλος 1972a; Σπυρόπουλος 1972b; Σπυρόπουλος 1973; Σπυρόπουλος 1981.

the “House of the Tiles” covered the central part of the building.⁴ At Olympia, part of a mound of similar type, dated to the end of EH II or the beginning of EH III, has been excavated, probably lying over architectural remnants.⁵ A fourth mound was found at Thebes. Of irregular shape and constructed of mud-bricks, this covered a complex of settlement and mortuary remains.⁶ Finally, a cluster of thirty-three tumuli of earth and stones, which contained burials, was excavated at Steno near Nidri, on the island of Leukas in the Ionian Sea.⁷ The earliest tumuli at Steno, Leukas are dated to the end of EH II and the latest in the EH III period. One more cluster of thirty tumuli of earth and stones, which contained burials, was excavated at Kriaritsi near Sykia on the peninsula of Chalkidiki, northern Greece, dated to the transitional period EH II/EH III.⁸

THE MOUND ON THE PLOT OF THE THEBES ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

On the plot where the new wing of the Thebes Archaeological Museum was built, excavations have revealed settlement and funerary remains covered by a mudbrick mound, all dated to the end of the Early Bronze II period.⁹ The settlement remains consist of a three-room apsidal building protected by a defensive wall to north and east (*fig. 1*).¹⁰ The building, 12m long and 7m wide, is freestanding and orientated east-west. The walls comprise a stone base and a mudbrick upper structure, with the inner surface coated with off-white plaster. The artefacts found inside the apsidal building point to typical household activities, such as storage, preparation and consumption of food, textile production and other domestic tasks. Both the apsidal room and the middle room yielded a small amount of pottery, mainly vessels for food consumption, a few obsidian blades and clay loom-weights. Inside the east room, where two successive beaten-earth floors and two successive hearths were uncovered, one small *pithos* near the entrance of the house and one pit dug in the solid bedrock, to accommodate a large *pithos*, were found. Abundant sherds of pots for cooking, serving and consuming food, as well as a few whole vases, some bone and stone tools and one “meerscham” seal with rectilinear incisions were collected, too.¹¹

Outside the apsidal building, to the east, an open-air hearth was revealed, in association with copious sherds of clay baking trays (approx. diam. 0.50m), as well as a storage facility,¹² perhaps semi-outdoor, which was furnished with eight large *pithoi*, four of them *in situ*, and some tableware. Two bronze spear points, one oblong and quadrilateral, and one of Branigan’s type III,¹³ a few metal needles and some stone tools were retrieved from this area. To the north of the apsidal building and the storage facility runs a narrow path of compacted earth and gravel, which ends to the west behind the apse. The whole residential unit is surrounded by a defensive wall, 3 to 5m wide and 2m high. This wall, part of which survives to the north and east of the plot, has a stone base with mudbrick upper structure.

4. Caskey 1955, p. 35; Caskey 1956, p. 165; Caskey 1968, p. 314-315; Forsén 1992, p. 36-37, 232-337; Wiencke 2000, p. 284-285, 297-298.

5. Dörpfeld 1935, p. 76-77, 118-121, pl. 5; Kyrieleis 1990, p. 184, 186, fig. 10.

6. Αραβαντινός 1996, p. 259-261; Αραβαντινός 1997, p. 354-359; Αραβαντινός 1998, p. 323-327; Aravantinos 2004, p. 1255-1259; Αραβαντινός, Ψαράκη forthcoming a.

7. Dörpfeld 1927; Forsén 1992, p. 92-93, 235; Müller 1989, p. 15.

8. Ασούχιδου *et al.* 1998; Asouhidou, this volume.

9. See footnote 6.

10. Parts of another fortification wall have been found adjacent to the rectangular building with corridors, known as the “Fortified Building” of Thebes, see Aravantinos 1986.

11. Pini 2004, p. 556, no. 374.

12. Ψαράκη forthcoming b; Psaraki *et al.* forthcoming.

13. Branigan 1974, p. 162 (no. 433a), pl. 27. A similar spear point was found on Amorgos.

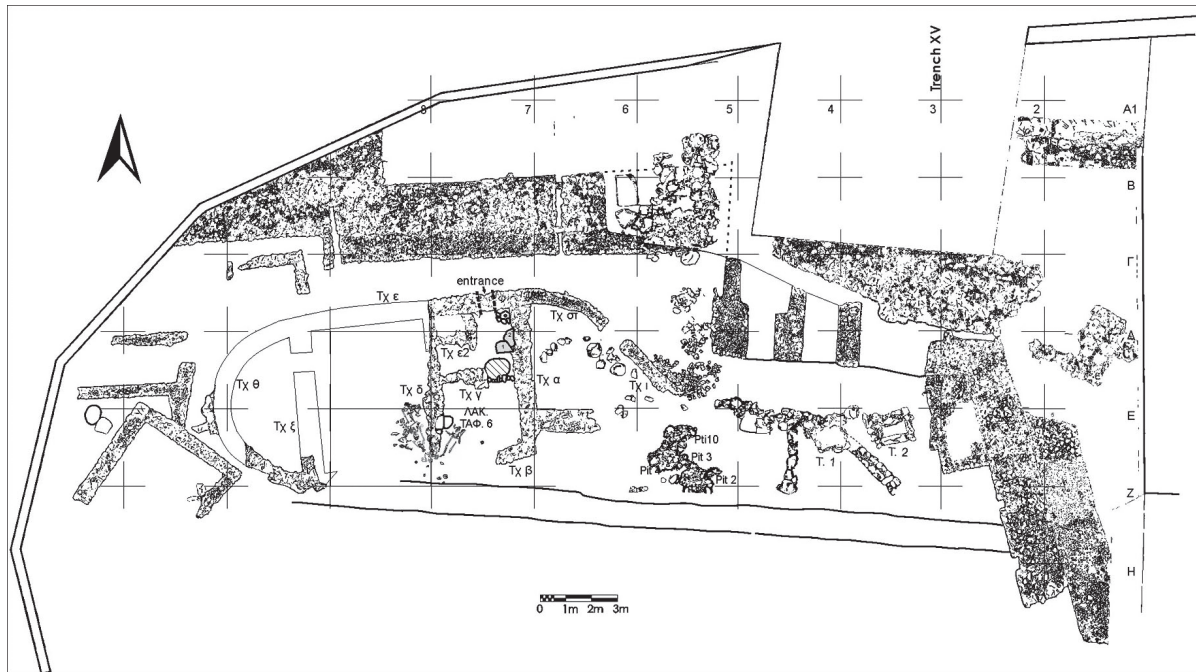


Fig. 1 – Plan of the excavation on the plot of the Thebes Archaeological Museum.

The pottery collected inside and outside the apsidal building dates from the end of the EH II period.¹⁴ The building seems to have been abandoned for some unknown reason. There is no evidence of destruction caused by fire. Parts of the mudbrick walls collapsed, creating a fill of disintegrated mud bricks covering the floors.

Soon after, a mass burial of at least twelve individuals was made inside the apsidal house, over the aforesaid fill.¹⁵ The individuals, adults and children, were inhumed in the southeast corner of the central room and the southwest corner of the east room. It is deduced from the different orientations and positions of the skeletons, and the fact that some of them were overlapping parts of others, that the dead were thrown without care. Even so, the burial was furnished with rather rich offerings, especially cups, bowls and jars, dated to the end of the EH II period.

Directly after the abandonment of the house and the mass burial, solid layers of mud bricks were laid carefully, filling the space between the upper structure of the defensive wall and the surviving walls of both the apsidal building and the other outdoor constructions (fig. 2-4). The mud bricks are of assorted sizes and colours. The approximate dimensions of the smallest bricks are h. 0.08m, l. 0.15m, w. 0.10m, and of the biggest h. 0.08m, l. 0.50m, w. 0.15m. Their colour varies from dark grey, brown and red to white. The thickness of the mudbrick fill that forms the mound and the number of mudbrick layers vary too, depending on the point in the mound (perimeter or centre). In the middle room of the apsidal building, the thickness of the fill ranges from about 0.15m in the southwest corner to 0.65m near the southeast corner and 0.80m in the northeast corner. In the east room, it ranges from 0.90m in the northeast to 0.40m in the south. To the north, in front of the threshold of the east room, the fill begins just above the pavement and is 0.80m thick, whereas to the northwest, in front of the apse, the thickness of the fill is reduced to 0.20-0.10m. East of the apsidal house, in the area of trench D6, the thickness of the fill reaches almost 2m. In the west part of the plot, the mudbrick fill of the mound reaches the top of the standing mudbrick upper structure of the apsidal building. Together with the mudbrick upper structure of the defensive wall to the north, the upper surface of the mudbrick mound was revealed more or less as a compact colourful “carpet” (fig. 7). In the east part of the plot, parts of the mound have been damaged, due to use of the space in the MH and LH periods.

14. Psaraki 2004; Psaraki 2007; Ψαράκη forthcoming a; Aravantinos, Psaraki forthcoming b; Hilditch *et al.* 2008.

15. Vika 2007.

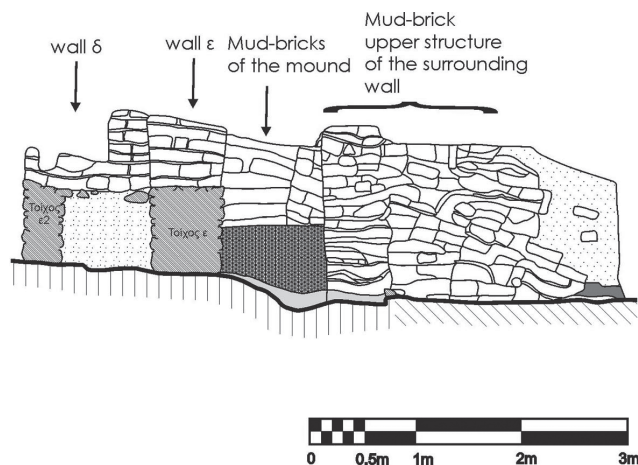


Fig. 2 – West side of the trial trench B7 – Γ7.

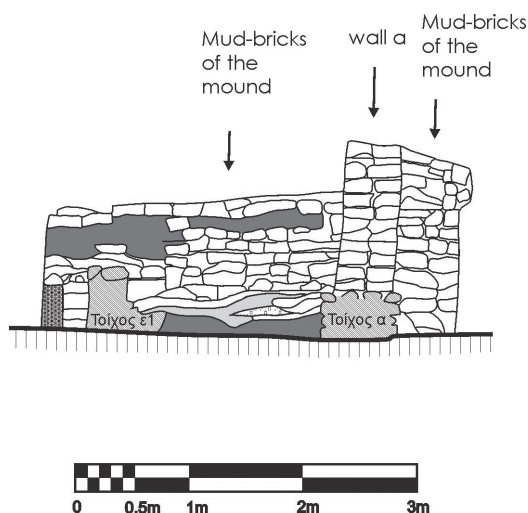


Fig. 3 – North side of the trial trench Δ6 – Δ7.

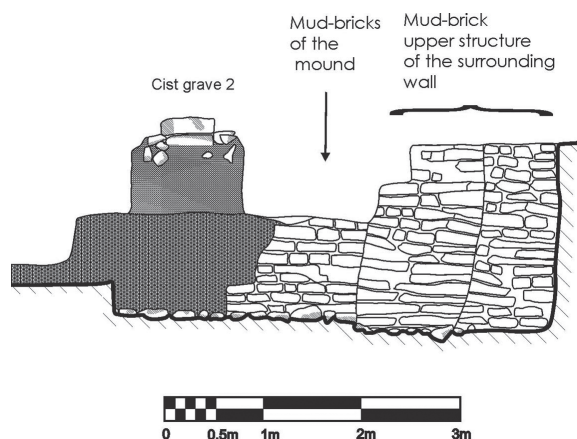


Fig. 4 – East side of the trial trench XV.

As a result, a mudbrick plateau was uncovered in the north half of the plot. The surviving shape of the mound gives the impression of a terrace of approximately 800 sq. m, which slopes to the northwest and to the north. The south edge of the mudbrick terrace abutted the rock in the south part of the plot. The original form of the mound has been damaged by subsequent use of the area. Although there is no evidence of human activity in the ensuing EH III period,¹⁶ there was a cemetery here during the Middle Bronze Age.¹⁷ The twenty-five graves (cists, cists of brick, pits) have been dug in the upper level of the EH brick-built mound. During the Late Bronze Age, the area was flattened and above that level the excavation revealed scant ruins of Mycenaean buildings and part of the Mycenaean city wall, dated to the LH IIIA-B period. Finally, in Byzantine times, a street of east-west orientation bisected the plot, demolishing the south edge of the mudbrick construction.

The mudbrick mound is dated to the end of EH II, that is to say, it was constructed soon after the abandonment of the apsidal building and after the mass burial, at the very end of the same cultural phase.

16. Totally absent are sherds or whole vases of Konsola's group C (Κόνσολα 1981, p. 124-126), as well as light on dark painted pottery of "Ayia Marina" style.

17. Aravantinos, Psaraki 2010.

THE MOUND ON THE “AMPHEION” HILL

About 150m to the north of the Kadmeia, another mudbrick tumulus has been uncovered. Although known from the beginning of 20th c.,¹⁸ the mound on the “Ampheion” hill was first excavated in the early 1970s, when a monumental cist grave was uncovered almost in the core of the mudbrick cone. This grave had been looted and the only finds that may be related with it are some pieces of gold jewellery, with parallels in the northeast Aegean area, dated within the EH period.¹⁹ Recent investigations by the 9th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, occasioned by a landscape project by the Municipality of Thebes, revealed new finds that contribute to the better understanding of the function of the mound.²⁰

As it survives today, this mound is in the form of a cone rising above the bedrock (*fig. 8-9*). Its maximum preserved height is 2m. Its maximum diameter on the north-south axis is 20m and on the east-west axis 21m (*fig. 5*). After the quite recent archaeological investigation and the examination of the stratigraphy, it is clear that the preserved upper level of the tumulus consists of mud bricks of various shapes and sizes, sometimes touching and sometimes apart from each other. This level slopes downwards from the centre to the periphery of the cone and its thickness decreases gradually from 0.75 to 0.10m. Beneath it, is a layer of very hard light-brown earth, again sloping downwards and decreasing in thickness from 0.70 to 0.15m. A third thin layer of reddish earth (0.10-0.15m thick) covers the bedrock. Continuation of the excavation under the tumulus levels resulted in the discovery of a cemetery of rock-cut tombs.²¹

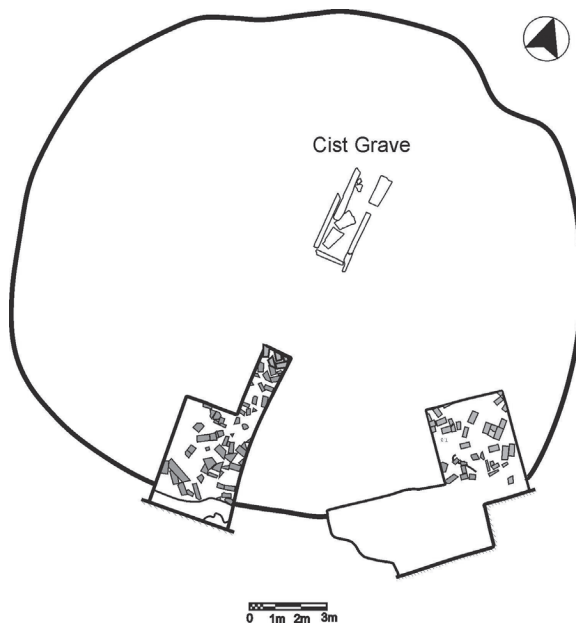


Fig. 5 – Plan of the tumulus on the “Ampheion” hill.

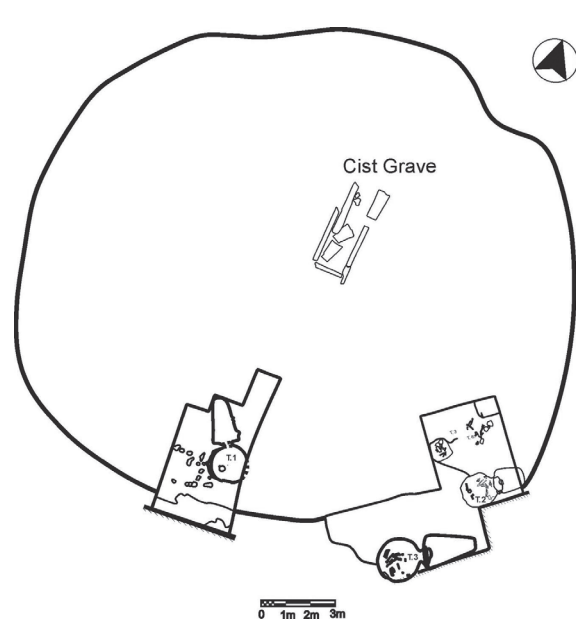


Fig. 6 – Plan of the rock cut tombs below the tumulus on the “Ampheion” hill.

18. Keramopoulos 1917, p. 384.

19. For the date, see Σπυρόπουλος 1972a; Σπυρόπουλος 1972b; Σπυρόπουλος 1981; Konsola 1981. Spyropoulos interpreted the construction of the tumulus in correlation with the existence of the cist grave. Also, he argued that the mudbrick tumulus lay on the top of the hill, the slopes of which had been carved in stepped arrangement, like an Egyptian pyramid of the “mastaba” type. For criticism and relevant references see Forsén 1992, p. 133-134.

20. Aravantinos, Psaraki forthcoming a; Aravantinos, Psaraki forthcoming b.

21. Although Spyropoulos (Σπυρόπουλος 1973, p. 248-252) mentions the existence of rock-cut tombs beneath the tumulus, noting that he found only their entrances, he did not proceed to their investigation and did not link them with the reason for constructing the tumulus.



Fig. 7 – Upper saved level of the mound on the plot of the Thebes Archaeological Museum and half part of a MH mudbrick cist grave.



Fig. 8 – The tumulus on the “Ampheion” hill and the central cist grave.



Fig. 9 – The tumulus on the “Ampheion” hill and the rock cut tombs.



Fig. 10 – Incised amphoriskos of Cycladic type.

To date, three tombs and the beginning of a fourth have been found, while the existence of others, inside or outside the limits of the tumulus, is considered certain.²² The tombs consist of a round chamber and a *dromos* (fig. 6; 9), a type characteristic in the regions of Boeotia and Euboea during the EH II period.²³ Inside the chamber of one tomb there was one skeleton and an incised *amphoriskos* of Cycladic type (fig. 10), probably imported, dated to the end of the EH I period.²⁴ In the chamber of one other tomb there were two skeletons of adults and a bone palette of Cycladic type (fig. 11), dated to the same period.²⁵

The typology of the pottery found in the tumulus layers suggests a date between the end of EH I and an advanced phase of the EH II period.²⁶ Consequently, this tumulus seems to be earlier than the one found on the plot adjacent to the Thebes Archaeological Museum.

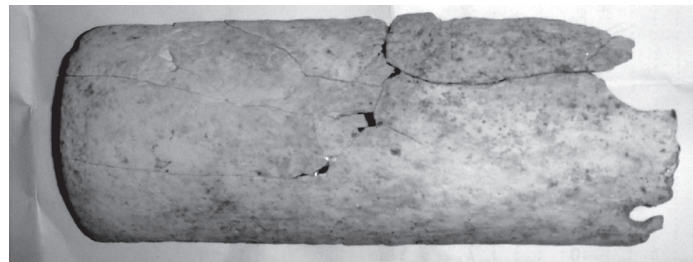


Fig. 11 – Bone palette of Cycladic type.

22. A geophysical diascopy is in progress at the “Ampeion” hill. The investigation conducted by N. Tsokas, professor of Geophysics in the Dept. of Geophysics, School of Geology, University of Thessaloniki, is taking place in order to receive as much information as possible about the subsoil of the “Ampeion” hill.
23. For Thebes, see Κεραμόπουλλος 1910, p. 250-252, fig. 28; Φαράκλας 1969a, p. 97; Lithares, see Σπυρόπουλος 1969. For the northeast creek of Paralimni, where some one hundred rock-cut tombs with *dromos* were found, see Φαράκλας 1969a; Φαράκλας 1969b. For the cemetery on the northeast shore of Paralimni, see Φαράκλας 1969a, p. 96. For the rock-cut tombs at Likeri (Elike), see Παπαδημητρίου 1931, p. 274-276, fig. 3. Φαράκλας 1969a, p. 97. For the cemetery at Hypaton, see Σπυρόπουλος 1970; For Manika, Chalkida, see Παπαβασιλείου 1910; Σάμψων 1985, 1988.
24. This type of *amphoriskos* is known from cemeteries in the Cyclades and more rarely from settlements, see Doulas 1977, p. 16, fig. 3h; Karantzali 1996, p. 101-102; Renfrew 1972, p. 155, fig. 10.2 (1, 7), pl. 3(3, 4); Rambach 2000, p. 104. This vessel type is known from the cemetery of Tsepi at Marathon, see Παντελίδου-Γκόφα 2005, p. 300-303.
25. The type of oblong marble palette with rounded corners is known from graves in the Cyclades, dated to the end of EC I (Plastiras phase) (Rambach 2000, p. 110, 118, 232-233; Doulas 1977, p. 17, fig. 5b), Crete (Karantzali 1996, p. 152) and the Greek Mainland (Mylonas 1959, p. 142, fig. 165; Blegen 1928, p. 195, fig. 165). Similar bone palettes were found in the cemetery of Tsepi at Marathon, dated by the excavator to EC I (Pelos culture), see Παντελίδου-Γκόφα 2005, p. 320-321.
26. Aravantinos, Psaraki forthcoming b. The pottery is similar to pottery group A, according to Konsola (Κόνσολα 1981, p. 118-119) and similar to the pottery from Lithares (Τζαβέλλα-Evjen 1984, Τζαβέλλα-Evjen 1985).

CONCLUSIONS

On present evidence, Thebes is the only EH site where two mudbrick mounds have been found: the first, on the “Ampheion” hill, almost 150m north of the Kadmeia, is dated to some time during the first half of the EH II period, while an intervention caused by the construction of the cist grave is not excluded as a possibility some time later during the EH period or potentially even up to the beginning of MBA.²⁷ The second, at the north edge of the Kadmeia, is dated to the end of the EH II period. Consequently, it seems that at Thebes the practice of tumulus construction was of long duration and it is important that this practice emerged, apparently for the first time in mainland Greece, not at the end of EH II, a period of important cultural changes and East Aegean influences, but earlier. Parallels for this practice should probably be sought in the Balkan Peninsula or even further north, where the practice of constructing tumuli was both old and common.²⁸

In comparing the two mounds of Thebes, although we can recognize as a common function for both constructions the erection of a “marker” (*sema*) for subjacent material, they are noted to display morphological and technical differences, and to differ also in their social meaning. The mudbrick mound over the rock cut tombs on the “Ampheion” hill is a funeral tumulus, the “marker” (*sema*) of a cemetery, whereas the mound on the Museum plot may be characterized as the “marker” (*sema*) of both a dwelling and a mass burial; in its metaphorical meaning, it is a “funerary” tumulus in that it is an earthwork monument inside which a domestic unit has been buried, and, in its literal meaning, it is a funerary tumulus because it covered a mass burial.

Focusing on the mound found on the Thebes Museum plot and trying to elucidate the reasons for its erection, it is obvious that this is a construction whose scale presupposes the collaboration of many people. The erection of such a mound presupposes an investment in time, human effort and expense, which exceeds the capabilities of the members of a household unit. The first questions raised are, who erected the tumulus and why, and what were the social relations between the individuals who joined forces in order to construct a communal earthwork of such size and type?

Probably the answer should be sought in the social characteristics of the buried building and the social status of its inhabitants. We may argue that the way in which a building is abandoned and the way in which the area is treated after the end of the building’s life, by the following generations, are indicative of the social role the building played during the period of its use. Moreover, if we consider that the intentionally and meticulously built mudbrick mound that covered this domestic unit became a conspicuous construction, which the following generations respected, we can speculate as to the social importance of the household. Consequently, the erection of the mudbrick mound/tumulus must be related to the social role played by this particular domestic unit.

So, what was the function of this apsidal building and what was the social role of its residents? The apsidal building on the Museum plot is not the only one that has been excavated at Thebes. Two other apsidal buildings, also dated to the end of the EH II period, have been found in the area of the Kadmeia.²⁹ The finds recovered from all three apsidal buildings indicate that they were private houses. However, the apsidal building on the Museum plot conflates features of private and public character, both in function and mode of construction. Adjacent to the private space of the apsidal house, there is a street, a courtyard and a large open-air-hearth, which might have been used by other households for food preparation. The apsidal building is surrounded by a defensive wall, which in terms of construction and use is a community project. Also, close to the apsidal building there is a semi-outdoor storage area whose total capacity of about 1500 litres would secure the household self-sufficiency in food supplies for more than a year.³⁰ It is probable that the surplus food supplies were exchanged or bartered in trade networks and in networks of social obligations and social promotion.³¹ The food surplus, in particular,

27. Aravantinos, Psaraki forthcoming b.

28. For discussion and references see Forsén 1992, p. 232; Müller 1989, p. 1-5.

29. Δημακοπούλου 1975, p. 192-198; Δημακοπούλου 1976, p. 123-124; Τουλούπα 1964, p. 195; Τουλούπα, Συμεώνογλου 1965, p. 230-232; Συμεώνογλου 1966, p. 180; Κόνσολα 1981, p. 106-109.

30. Ψαράκη forthcoming b; Aravantinos, Psaraki forthcoming b. According to ethnoarchaeological studies a quantity of 1500 litres would secure the household in food supplies for 12 to 18 months (Christakis 1999).

31. Wesson 1999, p. 156-157, Psaraki *et al.* forthcoming.

could have been allocated to individuals or other households with insufficient supplies, in exchange for artefacts or labour, that is, it may have been used in social networks of obligation and interaction, so playing a role in establishing power relations between the individuals of this household and the individuals of other households of the settlement.³² This last phenomenon, of economic and social character, based on the control and distribution of the stockpiles of food, may reflect the political power and the regulatory role of this particular household in one population group. The conflation of private and public features of this domestic unit reflects the complexity of the social relations within it, involving a significant number of individuals linked not necessarily by kinship ties but also by relations created by a mesh of social and economic obligations. Moreover, the possession by the residents of the apsidal building of objects such as the sealstone, the bronze weapons and the vases of Anatolian provenance reflects their ability to manage symbolic capital that would invest them potentially with political and social power. Thus, it is probable that the residents of this apsidal house had a high social status and that a number of other individuals or households depended on them, through power relations. According to Wright,³³ during the EH period, societies which he calls “transegalitarian” operated as multi-centric economies, that is, their economy was based on small groups of lineages economically tied into a “household” system of redistribution. The existence of such power relations in EH II Thebes may explain the mobilization of such a large labour force in order to build the fortification wall and to erect the massive mudbrick mound over a household that probably played a leading role in relation to other households at the site.

Finally, regarding the mass burial, the circumstances in which these persons died and their connection with the specific household are certainly puzzling. According to Vika,³⁴ who studied the skeletons, the individuals did not suffer from disease and had a varied diet. The latter observation led her to argue that at least some of the persons were not relatives. Nonetheless, we contend that there must have been some kind of correlation between these individuals and the specific household unit.

The construction of a tumulus over the ruins of a domestic unit is known also from Lerna, where, after the end of Lerna III, a low circular mound formed of debris from the destruction of the “House of the Tiles” covered almost the entire area of the building. It formed a circle approximately 18.75m in diameter and 1m high. Another tumulus, dated to the end of EH II, was excavated at Olympia. At the moment its use is unknown but it is rather similar to the tumulus at Lerna. The rarity and the variability of the phenomenon make its interpretation difficult, not only in relation to the provenance of this practice but also in relation to its social meaning. The construction of these monumental earthworks must signify some kind of respect for the domestic units they cover. In the case of Thebes and Lerna, this respect continued during the years immediately following, when the area was free of houses. According to Wiencke, the burying of the “House of the Tiles” may represent not only the end of the social life of this specific unit but also the end of the specific social reality of the EH II period.³⁵ These mounds were constructed in memory of and out of respect for the residents of the buildings they cover, and also in memory of the specific social context that raised them and had run its course.³⁶ In this case, we are dealing with the practice of burying a space of particular importance for the community, with the aim of transforming it into a kind of community monument.

The erection of earthworks designates a particular place or a particular building as a locus that coincides with social values, particular events and collective identity. The fact that such constructions transmit the memory of an event and/or social meanings makes them monuments.³⁷ Consequently, monuments are usually erected in memory of a particular event or as the “distillate” of a particular social experience, and they integrate the essence of a social reality. So, it is not fortuitous that monuments are some of the most powerful means by which a society registers its history on the landscape and invigorates social memory.³⁸ Earthwork

32. Hayden 1995, p. 59; Psaraki *et al.* forthcoming.

33. Wright 2004, p. 68-70.

34. Vika 2007.

35. Wiencke 2000, p. 297-298.

36. Bradley 1998, p. 46; Bradley 2005, p. 58.

37. Σταυρίδης 1990, p. 115-118.

38. Bourdieu 1990; Bradley 1998; Giddens 1984; Tilley 1994.

monuments, like all the physical objects of the material space of a community, are often more durable than other forms of material culture and this allows their symbolic meaning to be interpreted and reinterpreted over a considerable period of time. It is through their engagement with that material space in the course of daily life that individuals build up their social memory and learn how to become members of a society.³⁹ As Lefebvre observes, “monumental space offers each member of a society an image of that membership. An image of his or her social visage is thus constituted by a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one”.⁴⁰ Monuments constitute historical landscapes whereby the community aims to reinforce its social cohesion and, as such, tumuli are monuments of high symbolic meanings.

The formation and coherence of societies involves the manipulation of symbols,⁴¹ which are often archaeologically visible. Symbolic expressions of this process are especially evident in the built environment. The transformation of a dwelling into a community monument may be seen as a constituent element of such a process. The recognition of a physical object as a symbol does not mean that all people share the same meaning of it.⁴² Different meanings are mediated by the idiosyncratic experience of the individuals, their age, sex, social status, family and clan. With respect to community monuments, we may expect that such variability in symbolic meanings can be glossed over. Instead, the differentiation of the meaning of a monument may be more evident between the members of different communities. In such a case, a mound becomes a monument that may be used by the community as a symbolic boundary and a symbolic marker, which distinguish it from other communities.

The emergence of communal monuments in some settlements of continental Greece, at the end of the EH II period or some time later, should be viewed as the result of social practices and social interactions, which, as Wright argues, “fostered the emergence of elites and elite groups”.⁴³ For Lerna and Thebes, at least, monumentality seems to be a crucial point for the structuring of social complexity and hierarchical relations. More than the exploitation of resources, the conduct of trade and the emergence of multi-centric economies, the erection of monuments by or in honour of elite groups manifests their ability to promote and maintain their status, and to legitimize a particular cosmic order. Furthermore, monumentality reinforced and maintained the historical and memorial structures of the societies, and it might also have been used as a “vehicle” for their promotion against other social groups and settlements in adjacent or distant regions.

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39. Connerton 1989, p. 36-37.

40. Lefebvre 2000 (1974), p. 220.

41. Bourdieu 1990; Cohen 1985; Hodder 1982; Hodder 1989.

42. Cohen 1985, p. 14-18.

43. Wright 2004, p. 68.

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BURIAL MOUNDS AND “RITUAL TUMULI” OF THE AEGEAN EARLY BRONZE AGE

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ABSTRACT

The appearance of the first burial mounds in the Aegean in the Early Helladic period is a very limited phenomenon compared to their widespread distribution in Southeast Europe during the same period. It seems necessary, therefore, to approach it within an interpretative framework on a scale broader than the exclusively local or regional. It is actually widely accepted that, in spite of cultural specificity, EH II Greece shared basic features with its Mediterranean and Balkan neighbours, such as the climate, the development of seafaring and the quest for metals, which all impacted upon society, including in the field of burial customs.

In this paper, the current state of research regarding the likely origin of the Helladic burial mounds is briefly presented. It is suggested that the chronological and typological heterogeneity of the corpus should be taken into account to trace the ancestry of the EH mounds; in particular, differences in the spatial organization of the cemeteries and the burial rites should lead us to question the link between the EH II burial mound cemetery on Lefkas and the other EH II-III burial mounds of Greece. The relationship between burial and non-burial mounds is further examined and it is argued that the primary function of mounds, and their common denominator, was that of monuments in the etymological sense (lat. *monumentum*), the memorial role of which helps to account for several aspects of the present set of data.

INTRODUCTION

The origin of burial mounds in Greece has always been a matter of discussion and still remains unexplained.¹ Their appearance in the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. is a very limited phenomenon compared to their widespread distribution in Southeast Europe during the same period.² For the whole of the EH II-III periods, burial mounds occur at six sites only:³ Steno on the island of Lefkas,⁴ Kriaritsi in

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1. Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 21; Dickinson 1994, p. 51; Müller Celka 2007, p. 175-181.
2. Parzinger 1993, vol. 2, p. 222; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 87, fig. 80; Srejović, Tasić 1987.
3. A further possible EH burial mound has been reported at Orchomenos in Arcadia but the lack of associated material makes its dating uncertain, cf. Alram-Stern 2004, p. 636.
4. Dörpfeld 1927, p. 217-250; Velde 1912; Hammond 1974; Branigan 1975; Pelon 1976, p. 88-94; Müller 1989, p. 5-15; Forsén 1992, p. 235-237; Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 20-30; Maran 1998, p. 102-104; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 1-70.

Chalkidike in eastern Macedonia,⁵ Moschovi Loutrakiou in Etolo-Acarmania,⁶ Thebes in Beotia,⁷ Olympia in Elis⁸ and Pellana in Laconia⁹ (*fig. 1*). The discussion has mainly focused on the R-Cemetery on Lefkas, the beginning of which was recently redated to the first part of the EH II period, or possibly even earlier,¹⁰ which made it the very first occurrence of burial mounds in Greece.¹¹



Fig. 1 – Map of Early Helladic burial mounds in Greece.

5. Asouhidou 1998; Asouhidou 2000; Asouhidou 2001; Asouhidou, this volume; Alram-Stern 2004, p. 817-819.
6. Kolonas 1997, p. 60-62, fig. 26; *BCH* 120/3 (1996), p. 1194; *AD* 45 (1990) [1995], B'1, p. 140.
7. Aravantinos 2004, p. 1255-1259; Aravantinos, Psaraki, this volume.
8. *AD* 19 (1964), B', p. 174 *sq.*; Koumouzelis 1980, p. 139-140.
9. Spyropoulos 1998; *BCH* 123/2 (1999), p. 688; Alram-Stern 2004, p. 646.
10. Maran 1998, p. 103-104, 230. The dating of the cemetery, which is based on pottery, does not concern the first burials (R17a, R15b, R11, R21a), because they were not associated with pottery and could therefore date back to an earlier phase (Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 95).
11. The Late Neolithic "burial mound" at Orchomenos proved to be a tell settlement with intramural burials (Karali, Gkioni 2006, p. 72-75) and the same probably holds true for Ayia Sophia, where the limits of the so-called tumulus and its relation to the nearby buildings have not been defined (Milojčić 1976, p. 4-18; Maran 1998, p. 230, n. 712; Müller Celka 2011).

In addition, three non-burial mounds had been recognized long ago at Thebes,¹² Lerna¹³ and Olympia.¹⁴ They have been classified by J. Forsén as “ritual tumuli”¹⁵ and the traces of ritual activities dating to the EH III period which were later uncovered on the edge of the Pelopion mound in Olympia tend to support her interpretation. Their relation to burial mounds, however, is still to be clarified.

Admittedly the evidence for burial practices on the Greek mainland during the Early Bronze Age, especially during EH III, is scarce, regardless of grave types.¹⁶ However, even when burial mounds grew in number in the following MH period, they remained sporadic and could never be considered a standard burial custom. For this reason, their origin sometimes raised the question of foreign influence, or even immigration into the Greek mainland,¹⁷ in spite of the fact that their grave goods – if any – did not look foreign to the local context. Since the late 1970s, the hypothesis of local development tended to prevail in archaeological literature.¹⁸ The recent interest in early sea-borne contacts and the recognition of trade routes linking the Western Balkans, the Adriatic and western Greece¹⁹ altered the trend and brought about the hypothesis of a west Balkan influence on the west coast of the Greek Mainland, including Lefkas and the R-Cemetery.²⁰ In her recent re-publication of the R-Cemetery, I. Kilian-Dirlmeier rejected altogether, on typological grounds, the hypothesis of direct links between Lefkas and the Balkans, but she allowed for the concept of a burial mound migrating during the second part of the 3rd mill. B.C.²¹

It has been a common assumption that the ancestry of the Helladic burial mounds could be traced back from their first appearance at Lefkas to their spread at the beginning of the MH period, and later at the transition from MH to LH. Although the heterogeneity of the corpus has been pointed out on several occasions, organic links between the diverse occurrences of burial mounds apparently have been taken for granted and have not been questioned so far,²² except for a few reservations.

In this paper, I shall revisit the issue of the origins of the 3rd millennium Greek burial mounds by placing them in their wider Aegean and Mediterranean context. EH II Greece saw the emergence of more complex societies due to significant cultural and technological changes such as the development of metallurgy on one hand, with its long-distance search for copper and tin, and polyculture on the other, with an increased capacity of producing, storing and re-distributing goods.²³ These most probably induced new patterns of social power and a new relation of man to landscape and land tenure. Two points will be examined in particular: first, I would like to highlight the chronological and typological gaps in the corpus of the EH burial mounds and to question the consistency of a direct filiation between the R-Cemetery on Lefkas and the other burial mounds; and second, I shall examine the relationship between the burial and non-burial mounds which characterize the EH II period.

12. Spyropoulos 1981; *AD* 27 (1972), B', p. 307-312; *AD* 27 (1973), B', p. 248-252; *AAA* 5 (1972), p. 16-26; Aravantinos, Psaraki, this volume.

13. Caskey 1955, p. 35; Caskey 1956, p. 165; Caskey 1968, p. 314-315.

14. Dörpfeld 1935, p. 118-124; Kyrieleis 1990; Rambach 2002, p. 182-192; Rambach 2004, p. 1214-1221.

15. Forsén 1992, p. 232-233.

16. Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 15-22; Maran 1998, p. 225-232; Rutter 2001, p. 116-117.

17. Hammond 1967; Hammond 1974; Hammond 1976, p. 113-123; Hood 1973, partic. p. 63; Hood 1986, partic. p. 54-55; Pelon 1976, p. 451-52; Pelon 1985. For diffusionism and burial mounds in general, cf. Müller 1989, p. 3, n. 5 with references; Harding, this volume, n. 24-28 with references.

18. Müller 1989; Dickinson 1994, p. 222; Boyd 2002, partic. p. 97-98.

19. Maran 1998; Rambach 2004; Maran 2007; Forenbaher 2008; Papageorgiou 2008; Della Casa, this volume.

20. Müller 1989, p. 35; Maran 1998, p. 432-450, partic. 434; cf. also Maran 2007.

21. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 82-89.

22. For implicit continuity, see Pelon 1976, p. 73-152, 452; Pelon 1985; Müller 1989; Forsén 1992, p. 233-236; Merkouri, Kouli in this volume. For reservations about the ancestry of the MH/LH I tumuli, see Dickinson 1994, p. 222; Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 30; Müller Celka 2007, p. 177-183.

23. Cosmopoulos 1991; Cosmopoulos 1995; Rutter 2001, p. 111-113.

STENO, KRIARITSI AND POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS

From the six sites where early burial mounds were uncovered, two are located at the western and northern fringe of the Helladic field, respectively at Steno on the island of Lefkas and at Kriaritsi Sykias in Chalkidike. They are the only instances found of burial mound cemeteries, compared with the other mounds which occur either in small clusters or isolated. As already mentioned, the former probably dates back to the beginning of EH II while the latter belongs to a period corresponding, in Helladic terms, to the second part of EH II and the transition to EH III.²⁴ The redating of the R-Cemetery to an early stage of EH II stresses how unique the tumulus architecture was in Greece during the first stage of the long EH II period.

On Lefkas, thirty-three burial mounds, out of about fifty, have been excavated in the R-Cemetery located in a coastal plain (*fig. 2a*). They consisted of a circular, carefully built wall, running from about 3 to 9m in diameter, and were filled with river pebbles and earth. Some scholars have expressed doubts about the occurrence of an actual earthen mound above the stony platforms²⁵ because its presence was extrapolated from residual stratigraphied layers on circle R1 only, as the whole cemetery was damaged by fluvial erosion.²⁶ The circles were arranged in rows of joining or slightly intersecting circles. They contained several seemingly primary inhumations (although incomplete in some cases) and secondary burials, in *pithoi* (storage jars), cist tombs and built chambers (two cases only). A firing place with ashes, fragments of human and animal burnt bones and artefacts was found on the original ground of every circle, except for the earlier ones.

The burial rite in the R-Cemetery is usually described as cremation (or “partial cremation”) because of the small fragments of incinerated human bones found in the firing places and the burning traces reported by the excavator on the skeletons: the bodies would have been burnt on the platforms with their burial array and then buried within the stone circles.²⁷ I have argued elsewhere that such an interpretation is not compatible with the anatomically connected skeletons buried in the graves,²⁸ nor with the anthropological report of Dörpfeld’s assistant.²⁹ Rather, cremation seems to have been performed on the firing places as a secondary, post-sepulchral ritual after removing the bones and grave goods of the primary inhumations from the graves. The intact burials found in contracted position in *pithoi* either belong to the early period of use of the cemetery (before the firing places were installed)³⁰ or to later burials at the first stage of the ritual.³¹ The disturbed primary inhumations possibly illustrate the partial withdrawal of bones selected for cremation on the platforms.³² It looks as if most of the cremated remains had been discarded outside the cemetery except if the surviving remains are no more than a small proportion of the original deposit.

According to the relative chronology of the circles and the dating of the pottery, the firing places appeared only during an advanced stage of the time-span covered by the cemetery.³³ They seem to indicate an evolution of the burial rites towards complexity and possibly a growing attention to lineage, as is usually inferred from the performance of secondary treatment rituals.³⁴ Secondary cremation, as I shall call it, is not otherwise attested in Bronze Age Greece. If my reassessment is correct, the R-Cemetery thus offers a remarkable exception.

24. Troy IIg-III, cf. Asouhidou, this volume.

25. Korres, this volume, p. 593.

26. Dörpfeld 1927, p. 224, fig. 18.

27. Dörpfeld 1927, p. 234, 237; Bernabò Brea 1985, p. 44; Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 18; Asouhidou 1998, p. 280; Asouhidou 2001, p. 38. *Contra*: Dickinson 1994, p. 221. For the mention of “partial cremation”, cf. Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 18.

28. Müller Celka 2011.

29. Velde 1912.

30. For instance R15b, cf. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 27-28.

31. For instance R5c, cf. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 15-16.

32. For instance R13f, g, j, k, cf. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 23-24.

33. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 97-99.

34. Chapman 1994, p. 46-47.

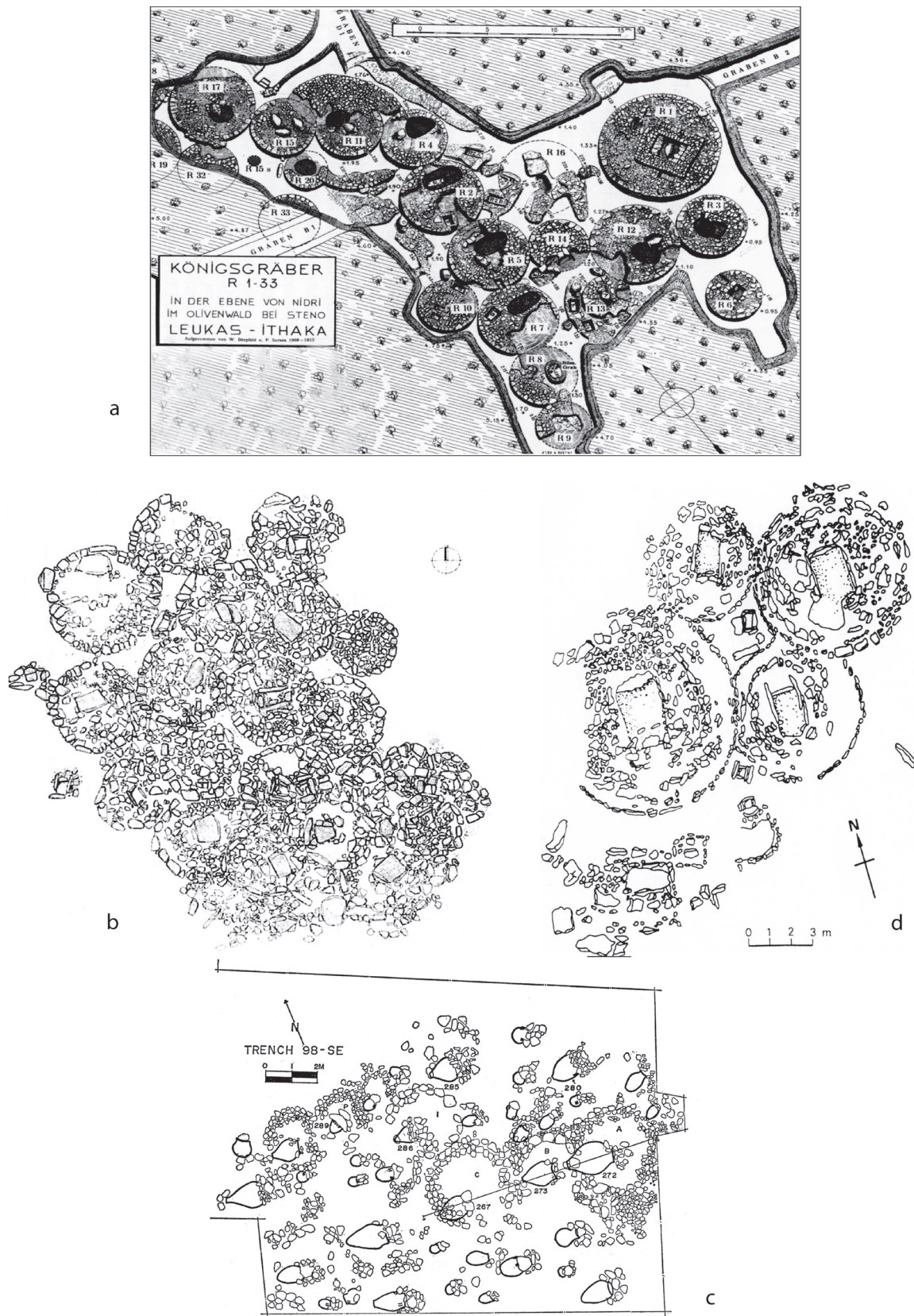


Fig. 2 – a: the R-Cemetery at Steno (plain of Nidri) on Lefkas (after Dörpfeld 1927); b: the cemetery at Kriaritsi (Chalkidike) (after Asouhidou 2001); c: the cemetery at Karataş (southwest Turkey) (after Mellink 1968); d: the cemetery at Li Muri, Arzachena (Sardinia) (after Bernabò Brea 1985).

This conclusion weakens the comparison which has been made between the R-Cemetery and the newly discovered burial mound cemetery at Kriaritsi in Chalkidike (*fig. 2b*),³⁵ where the exclusive burial rite is plain cremation in urns. The cemetery consisted of a compact group of thirty small joining or intersecting stone circles, no more than about 3m in diameter, each one covered by a low cairn in its original condition. Within the cairn, there were one or rarely two cist tombs containing a individual cremation in an upright standing burial jar, with one pot or no grave goods at all.

Kriaritsi and the R-Cemetery at Steno share obvious similarities, namely the large number of mounds and the very peculiar disposition of the joining or intersecting circles, even more so because they do not have much in common with the larger, single mounds of the Helladic culture which, as a rule, do not occur in a coastal location. However, the cremation in pots markedly differs from the burial rites performed at Steno – although one could argue that the burial rites included the use of fire at both sites. Cremations do occur in Greek Macedonia, the South Balkans and Asia Minor during the same period³⁶ but the spatial organization of the cemetery has no close parallel in these areas except for Karataş in southwest Turkey (*fig. 2c*).³⁷ At Karataş, however, the manner in which the deceased were disposed of has nothing in common with that of Kriaritsi but rather recalls the R-Cemetery: single or multiple primary inhumations in horizontally placed burial *pithoi* (and, in one case, in a built chamber) with a rich array of grave goods including jewellery, tools and weapons.

It should be underlined that typologically speaking all three burial mound cemeteries seem to be isolated in their respective cultural environment, at least according to the current state of research. They also share the platform-like aspect of the stone circles, since the presence of a mound is pure conjecture in all three cases, but the carefully built walls of the R-Cemetery differ in size and care from the basic arrangement at Kriaritsi and Karataş. A further common feature is their location on (or close to) maritime routes possibly related to the diffusion of metallurgy.³⁸ It is interesting to note that the summer sea currents of the Aegean run from the south eastern coast of Asia Minor to the north eastern Aegean and Chalkidike, the western Cyclades, the Peloponnese, the Ionian islands and the Adriatic.³⁹ Therefore Kriaritsi, Karataş and Lefkas are linked by a direct sea route in spite of the fact that they appear so far apart. This may account for the metal objects of Cycladic and north eastern Aegean origin in the Lefkas cemetery and for the north eastern Aegean affinities of the house planning at Karataş.⁴⁰ Do formal similarities in the aforementioned cemeteries mean anything? Are we confronted with some kind of early *emporion* dedicated to specialized trade activities? In my opinion, the use of cremation as well as the significantly later date of the Kriaritsi cemetery speak against such a conclusion, especially in the absence of detailed information about related settlement sites at Kriaritsi and Steno.

Strikingly, several peculiarities of the R-Cemetery are best paralleled at Arzachena-Li Muri in Sardinia⁴¹ (*fig. 2d*), such as intersecting stone circles (about 5-9m in diameter) and slab cists within and outside stony platforms (but additional small dolmens vertically placed at the periphery of the circles and possibly used as grave stelae have no counterparts at Steno). The Arzachena Culture characterizes the north eastern end of the island (Gallura) and is now considered as part of the megalithic facies of

35. Asouhidou 1998, p. 280; Asouhidou 2001, p. 38; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 85.

36. Asouhidou 1998, p. 280-281; Asouhidou 2001, p. 38-42.

37. Mellink 1969; Stech-Wheeler 1974, p. 415-418. The cemetery dates back to the west Anatolian EBA I-III. The material is not yet published; the nearby settlement covers the whole of the EBA (cf. Eslick 2009, p. 244-245) but is predominantly EBA II and lacks the final phase EBA III B.

38. Apart from copper, the recent discovery of tin in Serbia and Bosnia reinforces the potential attraction of the Adriatic coast for the peoples of the Greek peninsula, cf. Durman 1997.

39. Papageorgiou 2008.

40. For an analysis of the metal finds from the R-Cemetery, see Branigan 1975 and Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 107-121. For Karataş, cf. Warner 1994 and Eslick 2009.

41. Puglisi 1942; Lilliu 1963, p. 26-35.

the Sardinian and Corsican Late Neolithic ending towards 2900-2700 B.C.⁴² This date allows for some overlapping with the new dating of the R-Cemetery to the first part of the 3rd mill. B.C.⁴³ Unfortunately the Li Muri cemetery is not well preserved and only one circle yielded an inhumation, said to be associated with ochre, as in the other cemeteries of the same region.⁴⁴ This evokes Velde's comment about the bones from the R-Cemetery, the dark colour of which he tentatively attributed to the presence of manganese or iron in the soil.⁴⁵ More significant is the mention of numerous human bones, including semi-cremated ones, in small natural caves in the surroundings of Li Muri,⁴⁶ which echoes the secondary burial rite at Steno and the possible discarding of bones from the firing places. Although no metal finds have been recovered at Li Muri, rare copper and silver objects made their appearance during the same period in Sardinia.⁴⁷ As a conclusion to this section, Li Muri and the Arzachena Culture burial circles appear to be likely predecessors of the R-Cemetery, in accordance with the growing body of evidence of EBA cultural contacts between the Central Mediterranean and western Greece.⁴⁸

LATER EH II-III BURIAL MOUNDS

Other burial mounds of the EH II period have been reported at Pellana in the Eurotas valley but only preliminary reports have been published so far:⁴⁹ three built circles of about 4m in diameter have been uncovered on a hill slope next to a related settlement said to date to the EH II period. Their disposition close to each other recalls that of the Steno circles, but only one of them contained a burial *pithos* as well as a pit full of bones and ashes and a rock-cut channel. Although this may allude to the use of fire in the course of the burial ritual, other unusual features such as internal partition walls and an opening in the *peribolos* have no counterparts in Steno, nor in any later burial mound. More information is needed before we can draw conclusions about possible chronological and typological links with Lefkas. It is nevertheless worth noting that Pellana also belongs to western Greece, although it lies significantly further south (cf. *fig. 1*), like most of the remaining EH burial mounds.

Still in the EH II period but at the end of the second part (contemporary with Konsola's phase B at Thebes and Lefkandi I, about 2500-2300 B.C.), a multiple burial covered by a thick layer of mudbrick came to light in Thebes next to the New Museum.⁵⁰ It was built within the contemporaneous EH IIB settlement above a destruction level on which a dozen skeletons were lying in disorder together with grave goods, mainly local pottery. The so-called burial mound was not a free-standing structure since its limits were formed by the upper structure of the defensive wall of the city and the surrounding collapsed walls of a large building.⁵¹ Although this clearly appears to be a "*sépulture de catastrophe*" resulting from some kind of exceptional disaster rather than a regular burial place, the intentional covering of the burials

42. The Arzachena Culture originally was related to the Sardinian Chalcolithic (around 2000-1800 according to Lilliu 1963, p. 14) and later variously dated after the contemporaneous Ozieri Culture of the Sardinian Late Neolithic: 3700-2500 B.C. in Basoli 1991, p. 27 (but 3500-2700 on the chronological table of the same volume, p. 13), 4000-3200 B.C. in Webster 1996, p. 47, ¹⁴C cal. 3800-2900 B.C. in Contu 1998, p. 66, table 11.2, 3200-2850/2800 in Ugas 1998, p. 252.

43. EH I: 3000-2700 B.C., earlier EH II 2700-2400 (= Lerna A-B), cf. Manning 1995, p. 144, 151, and fig. 2.

44. Lilliu 1963, p. 29.

45. Velde 1912, p. 848.

46. Bernabò Brea 1985, p. 44.

47. Webster 1996, p. 49.

48. La Rosa 2005; Marazzi, Tusa 2005; Nicolis 2005; Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007; Recchia, this volume.

49. Cf. *supra*, n. 9.

50. Cf. *supra*, n. 7.

51. For this reason its identification as a tumulus has been challenged, cf. Alram-Stern 2004, p. 204.

is beyond doubt. It is worth noting that the space enclosed by the heap of mudbrick was not re-used until the MH period, again for burials. However, the Thebes multiple burial bears no relationship of any kind to the R-Cemetery at Steno. I shall return to it in the next section.

In the EH III period, only two burial mounds are known from very summary preliminary reports. One was in the area of the New Museum at Olympia⁵² where scanty evidence may represent one or possibly two mounds, the date of which rests on a few sherds and a clay anchor-shaped pendant. The presence of burials has been inferred from *pithos* fragments and burnt bones found in a central cairn surrounded by a simple row of stones of about 6m in diameter. The other was found at Moschovi near Loutraki in Acarnania.⁵³ Five inhumation burials in *pithoi* and built cists were uncovered towards the periphery on a EH III stone mound, the central part of which was destroyed when a late Bronze Age tholos tomb was inserted in its core. Dimensions are specified for the tholos tomb only (2.40m in diameter and height), meaning that the diameter of the mound probably matches that of the Olympia mound. The dead were placed on their side in a crouched position with few burial gifts, mainly lithic tools, shells and some arrow heads. The only child burial was in a *pithos* with flint arrow heads and a small matt-painted jar, the mention of which allows for a likely MH date – the EH III sherds could belong to an earlier deposit from which the mound had been erected, as happened to other MH burial mounds. As a matter of fact, these two mounds are typologically related to a group of early MH burial mounds (such as Ayios Ioannis-Papoulia, Voïdokilia and Kastroulia in Messenia, Aphidna and Vrana I in Attica, Argos I and possibly Asine in Argolis, and Drachmani in central Greece⁵⁴). The mounds at Olympia and Moschovi indeed have very little in common with the R-Cemetery, except perhaps the fact that they are located along the western face of Greece, and they date to about half a millennium later. It seems therefore unfounded to suppose that the EH III-MH I burial mounds directly derive from the Lefkas stone circles and the tracing of their ancestry requires another explanation.

BURIAL MOUNDS AND “RITUAL TUMULI”

Let us now turn to the so-called “ritual tumuli” at Thebes, Olympia and Lerna, which all occur during the EH II gap between the R-Cemetery and the EH III burial mounds. They appear to be the mere accumulation of earth, rubble or bricks forming a mound of much larger diameter (about 20-35m) than the former EH II and later EH III burial mounds, with a single row of stones marking their periphery. Do the burial and non-burial mounds fundamentally differ from each other or do they share some common features? A close examination actually reveals that the “ritual tumuli” do have special links with the funerary sphere in that they seal and mark past evidence, either events or buildings, just as burial mounds seal and mark the places where people were buried, in a highly visible and long-lasting manner. Both groups are thus endowed with a memorial function; in other terms they are monuments in the etymological sense, cf. latin *monumentum* (derived from *monere*, to bring to notice, to remind, to warn). The meanings of *monumentum* are as follows: a) *building or sim. erected to commemorate a person or event*, b) *sepulchral monument, grave*, c) *anything which serves as a commemoration, memorial*.⁵⁵ I suggest that this definition of *monumentum* has a heuristic value when applied to the study of burial and non-burial mounds. As a matter of fact, it is common knowledge that monuments are of prime importance to establish or maintain identity in communities, especially in ancient societies without writing, in providing spatial and chronological

52. Cf. *supra*, n. 8.

53. Cf. *supra*, n. 6.

54. For related bibliography, cf. Müller 1989, p. 20-23. For Kastroulia, Asine and Argos, see also Rambach, Voutsaki *et al.* and Sarri, Voutsaki in this volume. For Aphidna, see also Forsén 2010. The newly discovered EH III mound at Atalanti also dates to the very end of the phase (cf. Papakonstantinou, this volume, p. 395).

55. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s.v.

landmarks for selected elements of their past.⁵⁶ A brief review of the data will show that the “ritual tumuli” tended to evolve towards funerary markers and, conversely, burial mounds entailed a ritual function, possibly preceding their funerary purpose.

In fact, many burial mounds cover not only graves but also underlying settlement remains, starting with the R-Cemetery on Lefkas.⁵⁷ In Messenia the burial mound at Voidokilia⁵⁸ provides the clearest example of the recycling of an earlier domestic space into a burial ground, but Olympia-New Museum and probably Moschovi Loutrakiou constitute further examples. At Kastroulia, the fill of the two MH I mounds has yielded a large quantity of almost exclusively EH II pottery, although the nearest EH II settlement is located on the opposite side of the river Xeropotamos.⁵⁹ This doubtless testifies to the preliminary transport and inclusion (appropriation?) of earlier (ancestral?) elements into the mounds. Furthermore, the ground surface below burial mounds and the stone cores display traces of ritual activities, for instance fire marks and/or broken pottery, at Olympia-New Museum, Ayios Ioannis and Routsis,⁶⁰ which allows for the hypothesis that community rituals were performed at the mound prior to the first setting of burials, or at occasions which were not necessarily related to funerals. The evidence therefore allows the hypothesis that the monumental and ritual functions preceded the burial one.

Regarding the “ritual tumuli”, the primary memorial function seems to have embodied a funerary dimension very early, if not from the beginning. At Lerna, the mound built over the House of the Tiles (about 20m in diameter) with its destruction rubble at the end of the EH II period illustrates the commemoration of a tragic event which ended the life of the building, if not that of its inhabitants. The two mounds of Thebes, on the other hand, offer an opportunity to trace the development of a funerary significance thanks to meaningful “transitional” examples. Indeed, the so-called Ampheion tumulus in Thebes, dating to the EH II period, was proved to have been erected above rock-cut chamber tombs of somewhat earlier date (EH I-II) in a prominent position on top of the Ampheion hill.⁶¹ It is likely that the builders of the mound had knowledge of the chamber tombs, although it is impossible to demonstrate it. Later, at the end of the EH II period, as we have seen above, the mound next to the New Museum was built above a destroyed building *and a multiple burial* immediately or shortly after the event, according to the types of the pottery of the grave goods and from the underlying building. As V. Aravantinos and K. Psaraki rightly pointed out,⁶² the mudbrick mound involved the transformation of domestic (or public?) space into a community monument but it also testifies for the first time to the deliberate association of such a monument with the presence of human bodies. That the burial and monumental functions eventually merged is shown also by the fact that shaft- and cist graves were later inserted into the “ritual tumulus” at Lerna and Thebes in the LH I period.⁶³

In the preceding EH I/II period, the cemetery at Tsepi near Marathon offers a possible forerunner of the “ritual tumuli” which also consists of a “hybrid”, that is a non-burial mound located in a contemporaneous burial ground. “Cairn 66”⁶⁴ was a small earthen mound (3.5m in diameter) covered with river pebbles on

56. Choay 2007, p. 14-15 (about the definition of monument): “le sens originel du terme est celui du latin *monumentum*, lui-même dérivé de *monere* (avertir, rappeler), ce qui interpelle la mémoire (...). En ce sens premier, on appellera monument tout artefact édifié par une communauté d’individus pour se remémorer, ou faire remémorer à d’autres générations, des personnes, des événements, des sacrifices, des rites ou des croyances (...) de façon à rappeler le passé en lui donnant un mode sensible de présence. (...) Ce passé est localisé et sélectionné à des fins vitales dans la mesure où il peut, directement, contribuer à maintenir et préserver l’identité d’une communauté. (...) Son rapport avec le temps vécu et avec la mémoire, autrement dit sa *fonction anthropologique*, constitue l’essence du monument”.

57. Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 99-107, 128.

58. Korres 1979, partic. p. 47-54.

59. Rambach 2007, p. 137-139; Rambach, this volume.

60. Borgna, Càssola Guida 2007, p. 197.

61. Cf. *supra*, n. 12.

62. Aravantinos, Psaraki in this volume.

63. The date of the cist tomb of the Ampheion hill is still being discussed, cf. Müller 1989, p. 19; Maran 1998, p. 230, n. 716; Aravantinos, Psaraki in this volume.

64. Pantelidou Gofa 2005, p. 279-281: λιθοσώρος 66. The central part of the cairn has not yet been excavated.

top of which an empty rectangular pit lined with stones was flanked by two vertical slabs. Interestingly, communal ceremonies took place in the cemetery, possibly at the time of funerals, as is revealed by a deposit of over 1000 vessels, a few meters to the west of the mound.⁶⁵ It is worth noting that the Tsepi cemetery offers the earliest examples of successive burials in built cists in Mainland Greece, which implies the recurring re-opening of collective graves. If the small “cairn 66” is indeed an early example of a “ritual tumulus”, then the funerary component should be considered an original part of the concept.

Now the appearance of these “ritual tumuli” also should be accounted for. They could be connected with the emergence of the changing social organization at the beginning of the EH II period, as the development of metallurgy and agriculture undoubtedly led to new patterns in the distribution of social power, inasmuch as they do constitute arenas of social power.⁶⁶ According to R. Chapman, “*the reasons for the creation of a new arena of social power are often related to the development of contradictions in the social order, where new developments are incompatible with the traditional social structure*”.⁶⁷ Not surprisingly, R. Bradley also noted that the emergence of burial mounds in Neolithic and Bronze Age western Europe took place at a time when agricultural practices had developed to the point of making arable land a sought-after value. In particular, the appearance of accessible, re-usable burials may be related to a new emphasis on ancestors in order to justify or establish the possession of land.⁶⁸ In the Aegean, it is widely accepted that there was a significant increase of agriculture and grazing in the course of the 3rd millennium B.C.⁶⁹ Recent studies have also demonstrated that the impact on the environment of wood collection and over-grazing could account for the severe erosion episodes that occurred around that time, together with a decrease of arable land.⁷⁰ The appearance of “ritual tumuli” and burial mounds in the EH II period in turn possibly betrays the appropriation of land by local elites and new concerns about territory and borders.

Interestingly, the concept of “monument” is said to be associated with the need for roots and security.⁷¹ This can fruitfully be applied to the EH period during which fortified settlements became common concomitantly with an increase in metal and chipped stone weapons.⁷² The very structure of “ritual tumuli” and burial mounds possibly illustrates the same phenomenon, inasmuch as the retaining wall or the stone circles surrounding the mound are reminiscent of a precinct which both delimitates and protects the space inside.

The “ritual tumuli” could well result from a spontaneous local phenomenon, since their distribution does not speak in favour of an influence from the Adriatic, unlike the EH II-III burial mounds which display a western bias. The question remains whether the spread of the latter at the beginning of the MH I period was stimulated by contacts with the Adriatic and the Western Balkans, where burial mounds were much more common. Whatever the answer, it is likely that “ritual tumuli” served as media for the development of burial mounds from the EH III period onwards, for their memorial function allowed the (foreign and local) burial mounds to be recognized as a readily operating burial form, expressing the social identity of selected groups or individuals. Incidentally, the primary character of mounds as monuments rather than burial places, as I tried to demonstrate, also suggests that their builders may have welcomed exotic features or imitated foreign monumental shapes, as is well attested by the monuments of historical times.⁷³ This may account, at least partly, for the formal diversity of the later MH and LH burial mounds.

65. Pantelidou Gofa 2010.

66. “The term arena of social power has been coined to identify those places where ideological, economic, military and political power can be spatially identified” (Chapman 1994, p. 54).

67. Chapman 1994, p. 54.

68. Bradley 1998, especially chap. 9.

69. For the relationship between geomorphology and settlement pattern in EBA, cf. Maran 1998, p. 255-259.

70. Whitelaw 2000, partic. p. 148-150.

71. Choay 2007, p. 15: “Pour ceux qui l’édifient comme pour ceux qui en reçoivent les avertissements, le monument est une défense contre le traumatisme de l’existence, un dispositif de sécurité (...) il est garant d’origine et calme l’incertitude des commencements”.

72. Dickinson 1994, p. 58-60 and 199-200; Cosmopoulos 1991, p. 56-73; Branigan 1999.

73. Note for instance the predilection for obelisks and mausolea going back to Roman Antiquity, in reference to contacts with the places these monuments originate from.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the burial mounds of Greece do not form a homogeneous corpus, nor do they originate from a single source or follow a linear development. The burial mounds of the R-Cemetery on Lefkas, if they were indeed burial mounds *stricto sensu*, are much earlier than the EH III/MH I burial mounds of central and southern Greece. Furthermore, their morphology and burial rites exhibit significant peculiarities, so that they can hardly be considered to be direct predecessors of the later Early Helladic burial mounds (except perhaps those at Pellana), let alone the larger "ritual tumuli" at Thebes, Olympia and Lerna. They are likely to belong to an old Central Mediterranean tradition which goes back to the Final Neolithic, best paralleled in northern Sardinia. The later EH II "ritual tumuli" fully deserve the label of monuments in the etymological sense of the word, which originally includes references to the funerary sphere. As such, they may have played a role in the appearance of proper burial mounds by combining with the memorial function of graves because they offered a suitable support (*i.e.* duration and visibility) to the EH III/MH I concern for the display of identity, origin and status through funerary matters. In other words, the appearance of burial mounds seems to express the emphasis laid by emerging social groups on chronological and spatial landmarks involving the predominant role of memory.

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WHY GRAVE CIRCLES A AND B AT MYCENAE ARE VERY UNLIKELY TO BE BURIAL TUMULI

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ABSTRACT

The theory that Grave Circles A and B at Mycenae are in fact burial tumuli has had several supporters in recent years, since it was revived by N.G.L. Hammond, although it has also encountered serious opposition. It is argued that this theory is fallacious, on the basis of the major differences between the grave circles and known tumuli in the Argolid and elsewhere in Greece, and the features that would make it extremely difficult to construct and use the graves within a tumulus. The true definition of a shaft grave is established, and local parallels for the type and for features of the burials are presented.

The theory that Graves Circles A and B at Mycenae were in fact burial tumuli has a long history, but although it has had some distinguished supporters,¹ it has always been very much a minority view. However, as the number of certified tumuli in mainland Greece has grown larger, so the temptation to interpret the grave circles as tumuli seems to have grown stronger. It has recently been linked to the idea that the people of the Shaft Graves are members of an intrusive elite, “chieftains and their followers”, to quote Hammond (1967, p. 96) – an idea that is still being argued on other grounds.

I do not believe for a moment that the Shaft Graves people are foreign intruders, but this does not in itself dismiss the notion that the grave circles were tumuli. As I have indicated, there is now a respectable number of burial tumuli in mainland Greece, though very few by comparison with other European regions. Many of them belong to the late stage of Middle Helladic, when Circle B was founded, and it is noteworthy that such tumuli have been identified at sites relatively close to Mycenae, Argos and Asine, of which you have just heard accounts.

As you will have perceived from previous papers, any consideration of the evidence from the tumuli in Greece, let alone elsewhere, must reveal how varied it is, even though details often went unrecorded, and few Greek tumuli are fully published. They can be placed on flat ground, in a commanding position on hillocks, even apparently on slopes. The perimeter of a tumulus was often marked by a wall that can be substantial – in the case of the Pappoulia tumulus in Messenia it is exceptional, 2m high and proportionately

* University of Durham. I would like to thank Elisabetta Borgna and Sylvie Müller Celka for inviting me to speak at the Ancestral Landscapes International Conference. This is a more formal version of the paper that I delivered, which replaces much of the original illustrative material shown with textual comment and provides some references and footnotes, and it has been revised in places, especially in the discussion of Circle A, where, thanks to Sylvie Müller Celka, I perceived that I had not understood Laffineur's arguments fully. Plans of the Mycenae Grave Circles and other graves and tumuli mentioned are available in this volume and in many standard sources (*e.g.* Pelon 1976), so I have not considered it necessary to reproduce them here.

1. Notably Chr. Tsountas (cited in Pelon 1976, p. 149), N.G.L. Hammond (1967, p. 83-89), O. Pelon (1976, p. 149-152, and 1987, p. 110-111), and Sylvie Müller Celka herself (2007, p. 183-186).

thick – but at Aphidna in Attica there was, apparently, only a row of stones. Some tumuli seem to have covered only a single burial, but much more often they contained several. The burials themselves were made in a whole variety of grave-forms, including *pithoi*, slab-cists, stone-built graves and simple pits; rarely, if ever, do they show signs of a common orientation. In some cases a tumulus may be enlarged from its original core – Marathon tumulus. I is a particularly good example – and burials can be made in association with a tumulus without being incorporated within the structure. Just about the only common factors are that, with a single exception, Tomb F on Leukas, all tumuli were evidently intended to be round in plan; the burials within those of Middle Helladic date are all inhumations; and the tombs containing the burials are rarely of very great size or depth and were normally intended for a single burial only.

The degree of variation is such that it is probably a waste of time arguing that the grave circles cannot be tumuli simply because their plans do not look as one might expect – although they do not – since it is impossible to formulate any clear set of expectations. But this also means that there was no fairly homogeneous tradition, which the builders of the grave circles can be suggested to have inherited, as Pelon has argued, using Leukas Tomb S as an example (1987, p. 110-111). Some major differences between certified tumuli and the grave circles can nevertheless be cited.

The grave circles' estimated size is much greater than that of most tumuli, and many of the tombs within them are far bigger than the average tomb in a tumulus; and while it was common for tombs in a tumulus to be sunk into the earth of the mound, *all* the tombs in both circles were sunk *below ground level*, many of them for several metres into earth and soft rock. Moreover, many were reused (quite unusual in a tumulus), sometimes more than once, up to a maximum of five burials, and these reused tombs were generally the largest and deepest. This is particularly the case in Circle A, where the tombs are largest and only Grave II held a single burial; also in Circle A, quite unusually, the great majority of the burials have the same orientation, with heads to the east (see addendum).

The reconstructed section of one of the later Circle B tombs, Gamma,² which at 3.8m long by a maximum 2.8m wide is close to the size of the smallest tombs in Circle A, Graves II and VI, shows what all the tombs in Circle A, and the great majority in Circle B, would have looked like, the only difference being in their depth (Gamma was 3.5m deep in total). Forget the distinction so often made in the literature between shafts and cists in Circle B: *none* were true cists, that is slab-cists, such as are found exclusively in Leukas Tomb S and the Asine tumulus, for example, and are common at Argos. The great majority are shafts, in which the characteristic ledge in the rock some way down the cutting, used to support a roof, or a wall serving the same purpose, is quite clearly reported. Those which do not have this ledge are simple rock-cut pits, like Grave Eta, so not cists either.

There are perfectly good parallels for the shaft grave form in the Argolid, not only at Lerna, where two well-known examples were cut deep into the settlement mound, but at Argos, where they are intermingled with pit and cist graves.³ The enlarging of the grave to considerable dimensions is also a feature that can be paralleled elsewhere;⁴ indeed, in all respects the early burials at Mycenae follow standard Middle Helladic burial practice, and none of the Mycenae burials diverge far from it. The links with Argos are particularly strong, for here there is evidence for the practice identified in Circle B, of marking the grave with a heap of stones; at Argos an intermediary practice between this and the erection of a rectangular stele, as found in four graves in Circle B and probably a feature of all Circle A graves, can be seen in the placing of more roughly shaped slabs or simple boulders on the grave.⁵ Argos also supplies examples of tombs as rich as the earlier large graves in Circle B: in particular, there are remarkably close links between the child's burial E5 – not a shaft grave – and Grave Iota.⁶

2. Mylonas 1973, p. 244, fig. 28.

3. For Lerna see Caskey 1955, p. 32-34 and Caskey 1956, p. 155-157; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1990, especially p. 78; K. Sarri, S. Voutsaki in this volume.

4. The dimensions of Shaft Grave 1 at Lerna are 4m long x 2.50m broad at the top, and it is over 2m deep; Shaft Grave 2 is 4.15m x 3.25m at the top and over 3m deep.

5. Protonotariou-Deilaki 2009, p. 228-237.

6. Both contain Type A swords, gold dress-ornaments, and large two- and four-handled jars, but the most significant link is provided by two virtually identical jars, decorated with large spirals in a light-on-dark polychrome style (see Mylonas 1973, pl. 95ß for the Iota example).

The ever-increasing size of the Mycenae graves deserves attention. I invite the reader to contemplate the logistical problems involved in sinking tombs for several metres down, not merely through the original ground surface and soft rock, but, on the tumulus theory, through the earth of the tumulus mound as well – and the tumulus should be at least high enough to rise a little distance above the perimeter wall, preserved for over 1 metre in Circle B. Then the burial and goods to be placed in the tomb have to be got down all these metres into it, and if there are repeated burials most of the original procedure has to be repeated, for the whole shaft would surely need to be cleared and the roof removed. How much labour this could have involved can be estimated from the calculation that it would have taken ten men about ten days to construct Shaft Grave V, one of the biggest (Wright 1987, p. 90). Such difficulties will have been encountered in constructing and reusing the tombs anyway; I suggest that they would have been increased enormously if there was a tumulus above the graves.

In the case of Circle A there are further problems. The choice of site was probably determined by the wish to have it easily visible to anyone taking the original natural route up the slope to the citadel. But the rock now slopes steeply here, perhaps by as much as 25% from east to west, as Robert Laffineur's careful analysis demonstrates (1987, p. 120), which would not make it at all an appropriate site on which to construct a tumulus. Laffineur notes the identification of traces of what has been supposed to be the original encircling wall, whose course would have been different from the later wall (1987, p. 118-119, cf. pl. 29); but this would need to have been a far more massive structure than these surviving fragments of wall, particularly on the west side, if it were to hold in a tumulus over 20m in diameter on a steep slope. However, Laffineur has argued that the abrupt slope may be the result of an early collapse of an originally much more plateau-like expanse of rock, after the original construction of the graves, and suggested that the 13th c. B.C. reorganization of the circle was in fact a necessary response to this collapse (1987, p. 121-124, cf. Laffineur 1990, p. 201). Certainly Schliemann noted masses of rock in the area of Graves III and IV, of which he wrote in his daybook, "the now dislocated and incumbent large blocks of rock have evidently once been straight, the rock having been cut into from above",⁷ *i.e.* he thought the upper parts of these graves had collapsed. But there is now no means of identifying when this happened; it could have been after prehistoric times.

Here we should confess that without plans of the graves and the circle as they were excavated, including a section of the appearance of the area, we can only rely on informed guesswork, and all calculations from measurements taken in modern times (as for the sections originally published by Wace in *BSA* 25, 1921-1923, pl. 17, reproduced with a suggested "low tumulus" in Laffineur 1987, pl. 30) are questionable, it seems to me. In any case, it still remains a fact that even a low tumulus would have added considerably to the inherent difficulties of reusing such generally deep graves.

There are subsidiary points that could be made, especially about Circle B. Here there is no obvious primary burial, as one might expect in a tumulus. Rather, the oldest burials seem to be grouped in distinct clusters, suggesting that they might represent different families, a feature not identified in any certain tumulus that I know of. And here too, if there had been a tumulus, it should surely have survived and, one might think, have inhibited the builders of the Tomb of Clytemnestra, whose chamber cuts into the eastern side of the circle and whose supporting mound must have completely covered it, preserving it to be excavated in modern times. But these points involve an element of speculation; I would prefer to base my case on the identifiable facts that, to my mind, make it extremely, extraordinarily unlikely that the grave circles could have been burial tumuli.

Why this rare variant of the typical Middle Helladic pit grave should have been developed in the Argolid we will probably never know. But we may guess why at Mycenae a group of such graves was enclosed within a circle, forming Circle B, repeated on a grander scale in Circle A – to emphasise the special (not necessarily elite, but definitely special) status of the persons buried within. In this respect, at least, the circles were like Middle Helladic tumuli.

7. Calder, Traill 1986, p. 198.

Addendum

My comments on Grave Circle A reflect the traditional account, but recent study has demonstrated that this is defective in important matters of detail, including the numbers of burials in individual graves. See Papazoglou-Manioudaki *et al.* 2010; a further article is intended for *BSA* 107 (2012).

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THE ARGOS “TUMULI” A RE-EXAMINATION

Kalliope SARRI*, Sofia VOUTSAKI**

ABSTRACT

The main aim of the Argos “Tumuli” Project is to publish the assemblage of the Argos “tumuli” cemeteries, excavated during rescue excavations in the late 1970s. The “Tumuli”, *i.e.* groupings of *ca.* 110 tombs found in the important settlement of Argos, were interpreted as burial mounds by the excavator, the late Dr E. Deilaki. These tombs are very important for our understanding of social organization during a crucial phase of Greek prehistory: the Middle Bronze Age and the transition to the Late Bronze Age, a period marked by rapid and pervasive social change, which eventually led to the formation of the Mycenaean palatial polities. The ultimate aim of our study is to understand the position of Argos in the changing political landscape of the Middle Bronze Age Argolid.

The project involves an up-to-date study of the burial assemblage and funerary practices, and the re-examination of archival information pertaining to the Argos “tumuli”. The project includes a full osteological examination of the (extant) skeletons, while various scientific methods of analysis (radiocarbon analysis, stable isotopes analysis, in order to establish dietary variation, and ancient DNA analysis, in order to establish kinship relations) are planned for the immediate future.

In this paper we will focus on the following questions:

- When were individual graves, or the “tumuli” as a whole, in use?
- Can we reconstruct the history of use of grave groupings or “tumuli”?
- Are we dealing with real and typical tumuli?
- Do these graves belong to an elite? Do they reflect social differentiation in the community?

During the 1970s, an extended MBA cemetery, which, according to the excavator, consisted of tumuli, was excavated at Argos, in the Argolid, southern Greece (*fig. 1*). The burial assemblage is largely contemporary to and has cultural similarities with the famous Grave Circles of Mycenae,¹ but also with other cemeteries at Asine, Prosymna and Lerna.²

EXCAVATIONS AND TOPOGRAPHY

The excavations were conducted during the 1970s by the then Head of the Argolid Ephorate, the late Evangelia Deilaki, who recognized at an early stage the importance of the finds and turned the rescue investigations into systematic excavations.³ The properties are located on the north edge of the modern

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1. Karo 1930; Mylonas 1973.

2. For a comparative study on the Argive cemeteries, see Dietz 1991; Milka forthcoming.

3. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1977; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980.

town of Argos below the Aspis hill (*fig. 2*). The extent of the excavations and the discovery of the large cemeteries were due to the building boom of the 70s in Argos and, indeed, all over Greece.

More than one hundred tombs have been excavated and they have given us important information about chronology, burial customs and social differentiation. The finds, comprising primarily vases but also tools, weapons and jewelry, reveal the local character of the assemblage, as well as occasional trade contacts and a gradual infiltration of foreign influences from the Cyclades and Aegina. The rich – in terms of pottery – burial contexts also offer valuable evidence for the chronology of this crucial period.⁴

The excavator interpreted the cemeteries as simple or composite tumuli, used at first during the early phases of the MBA and increasingly in the latest phases of the period, with only a few tombs continuing into the LBA.⁵ The area was also used as a cemetery in the Geometric, late Classical and Hellenistic period. The later occupation has destroyed the MBA remains and has obliterated most of the traces of the burial arrangements. The findings have only been presented in a preliminary fashion.⁶ As a result, the Argos “tumuli” constitute one of the most extended, complex and most disputed MB cemeteries of Mainland Greece.

In this paper we would like to focus on the following questions:

- Can we reconstruct the history of use of grave clusters or “tumuli”?
- Are we dealing with tumuli or not?
- Do these graves belong to an elite?

We will try to answer these questions by examining the form and the construction of the “tumuli”, and by comparing them to other cemeteries in the Argolid. This will allow us to understand the significance of these cemeteries during the MBA and the transition to the LBA, a period characterized by rapid social change which eventually led to the formation of the Mycenaean palatial societies.

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA: THE EXCAVATIONS BY E. DEILAKI

The Argos cemeteries are extra-mural, formal cemeteries. In some locations earlier settlement layers have been detected while in a few cases later buildings, usually belonging to the LBA, have been found.⁷ All tombs, be they cists, pits, *pithoi* or built tombs, are located on the same level. No considerable elevation differences exist and only rarely can layering of graves be observed.

In Tumulus A, a circular stone built enclosure gives us sufficient evidence for the existence of a tumulus (*fig. 3*).⁸ A small, central apsidal construction, containing layers of burnt soil and early MH vases found *in situ*, was interpreted as having a ritual function (*fig. 4*). The fill is comprised of successive layers of clay and pebbles. One early *pithos* burial belongs to this earlier phase of use. Later graves were opened around the enclosure in the MH IIIB period.

Only a small part of Tumulus B, containing three early MH graves has been excavated (*fig. 5*). A rectangular building of MH or LH date was later built around 1m higher than the tombs.⁹

Tumulus Γ covers an extended area containing eighty tombs (*fig. 6*).¹⁰ In the middle of the W side there is a cluster of cist graves and burial *pithoi*, which are of very early MH I-II date (*fig. 7*). To the north

4. On the chronology see Dietz 1980; Graziadio 1988; Dietz 1991; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1986; Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980.

5. A first chronological arrangement of the Argos graves can be found in Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, p. 179-186, table 1, fig. 180A. Compare Sarri *in* Voutsaki *et al.* 2007, p. 85.

6. In Deilaki's doctoral dissertation: Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980. A printed version of the original text is being distributed by the Ephorate of Speleology of Southern Greece (2009).

7. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, p. 6-8, 23-24, 28.

8. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, p. 9-14, general plan 2.

9. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, p. 23-24, pl. B2, 3.

10. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, p. 27-30, general plan 6.

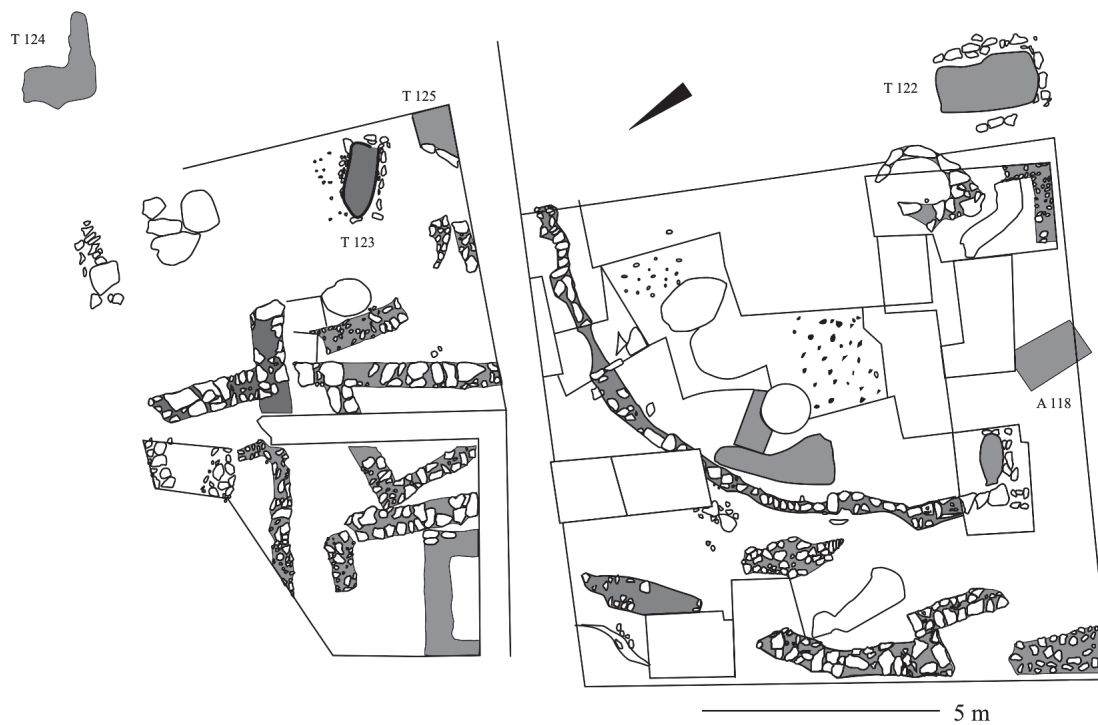


Fig. 3 – Tumulus A (based on Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, general plan 2).

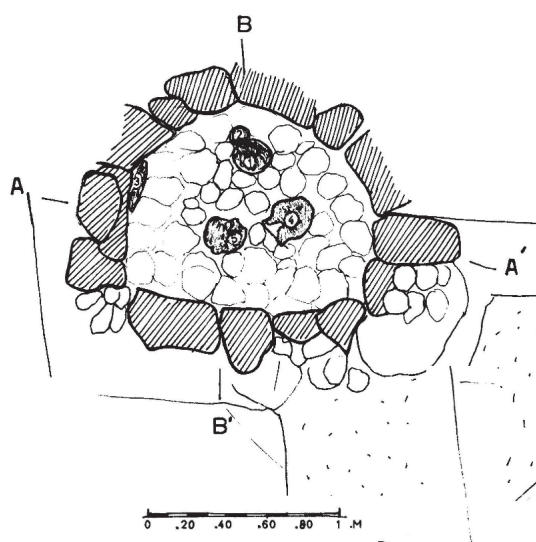


Fig. 4 – Tumulus A. Apsidal construction (after Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, fig. A5).

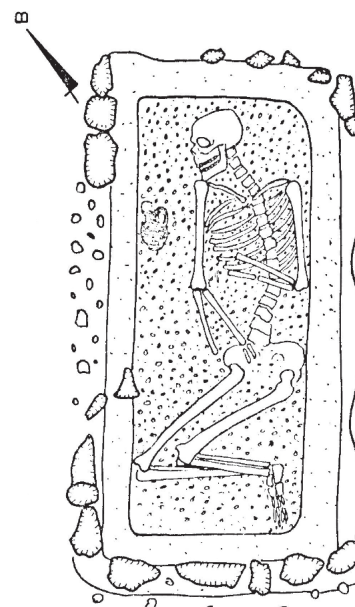


Fig. 5 – “Tumulus B”. Grave B: 137 (A) (after Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, fig. B1).

a later built grave of LH II with a saddle roof was found. The rest of the tombs belong to the MH IIIB period and are arranged in loose groupings (*fig. 8*). One of the clusters may have been placed in some kind of circular arrangement in the centre of which a Mycenaean well was later opened.

From tumulus Δ it is worth mentioning a simply constructed but fairly rich MH IIIB tomb of a young girl, containing various precious ornaments, as well as twenty vessels placed inside but also outside the cist (*fig. 9*).¹¹ A Mycenaean building decorated with frescoes was built here at a higher level in LH II-III A1.

Among the interesting tombs of Tumulus E¹² is the burial of a young boy buried with a bronze sword and gold bands (*fig. 10*) while, in another grave, an adult had a golden band around his wrist.

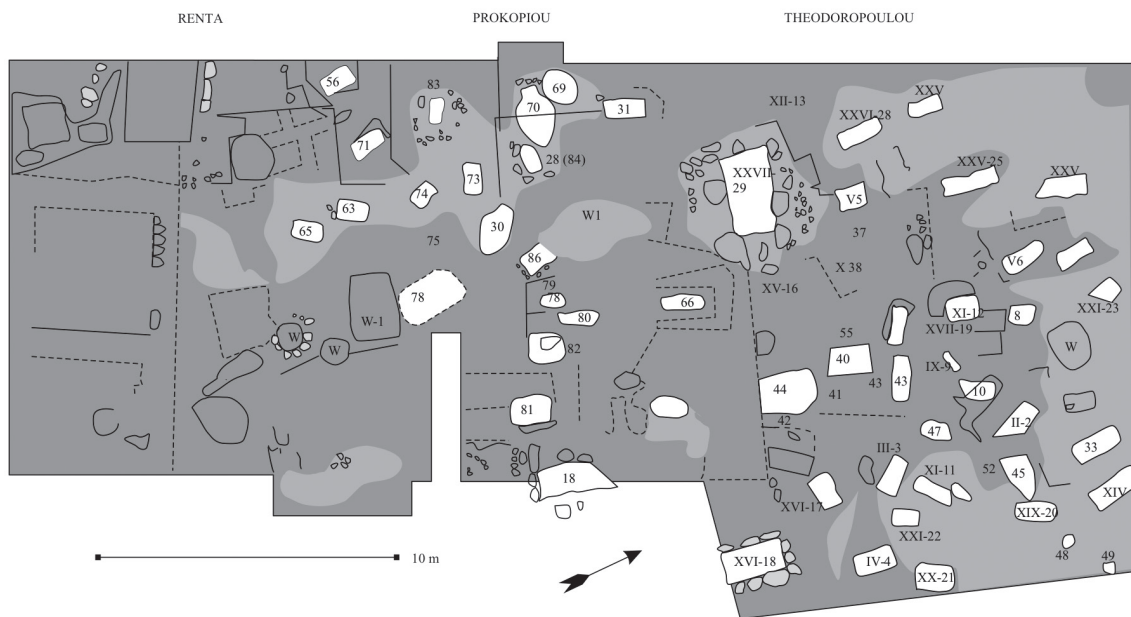


Fig. 6 – Tumulus Γ. General plan (based on Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, general plan 6).
The preserved pebble layers are shown with light gray.

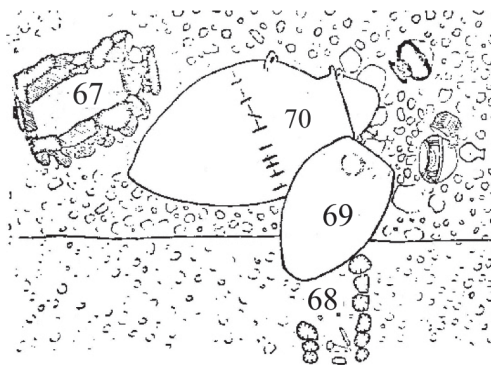


Fig. 7 – Tumulus Γ. Burial pit of Grave 70 (after Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, fig. Γ 46).

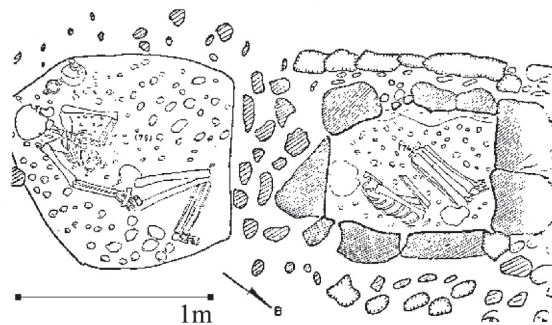


Fig. 8 – Tumulus Γ. Graves 74 and 75 (after Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, fig. Γ 50).

11. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, p. 89-91. Grave 1: p. 91-101.

12. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, p. 110-122.

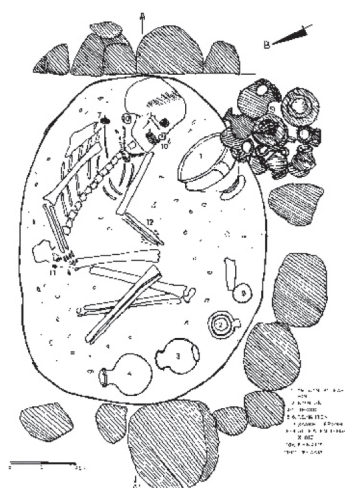


Fig. 9 – “Tumulus Δ”. Grave I-140
(after Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, fig. A1).

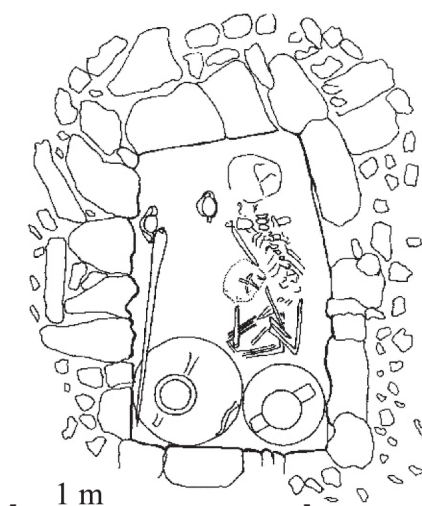


Fig. 10 – “Tumulus E”. Grave 5 (92)
(after Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, fig. E6).

SUBSEQUENT RESEARCH AND RECENT OBSERVATIONS

After the 1970s, continuing rescue excavations in the area revealed similar finds in several locations but very little has been published or even described in preliminary reports.¹³ Later investigations in the area did not always confirm the existence of tumuli; while Morou observed sloping pebble layers around a large cist,¹⁴ others have interpreted such pebble layers as the result of natural sedimentation due to periodic flooding in the area.¹⁵ Recent excavations in the area designated by Deilaki as “tumulus ΣΤ” have further weakened the tumuli-reconstruction; tombs seem to be laid out on either side of a wide street.¹⁶ Therefore, for almost forty years and in the absence of a final publication of the tumuli the question has remained unanswered: are the Argos “tumuli” real tumuli or not?

THE ARGOS “TUMULI” PROJECT

The re-examination of the Argos “tumuli” is part of a wider multi-disciplinary project, the *Middle Helladic Argolid Project*, whose aim is to reconstruct the social organization of MH communities and to interpret the important social, political and cultural changes that took place on the southern Greek Mainland during the MH period. The task is pursued by means of an integrated analysis of funerary, skeletal and settlement data from the MH Argolid.¹⁷

13. Divari-Valakou 1998; Papadimitriou 2001; Papadimitriou 2010.

14. Morou 1989, p. 109.

15. Divari-Valakou 1998, p. 89; Papadimitriou 2010.

16. Papadimitriou 2010.

17. For the general aims of the *Middle Helladic Argolid Project* see Voutsaki 2005. For further information see the project website: <http://www.MHArgolid.nl>, or the annual reports: Voutsaki *et al.* 2004; Voutsaki *et al.* 2005; Voutsaki *et al.* 2006; Voutsaki *et al.* 2007; Voutsaki *et al.* 2009. The project is financed by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the University of Groningen, the Netherlands.

The main aim of the Argos “Tumuli” Project is the final publication of the Argos tumuli cemeteries. Our sources are the finds and a fairly rich documentation archive, all kindly provided by the service of the Antiquities Service.¹⁸ Alongside the study of the archaeological data, our project has carried out a full osteological study of the extant skeletons,¹⁹ which will be accompanied by stable isotopes and ancient DNA analysis, as well as radiocarbon analysis of selected skeletons.

PERIODS OF USE

Based on the ceramic finds we are able to define two phases of use.²⁰ The first, MH I-II is attested in the area of tumuli A and Γ. All the other tombs belong to the second period, the transitional MH IIIB-LH I. There are no graves which can be attributed with certainty to the MH II period.²¹ Some of the unfurnished tombs may belong to this period or, alternatively, there may be a break in the sequence. We should keep in mind that the prevailing custom in the MH period is burials within the settlement²² and that extramural cemeteries are attested from MH I-MH II period onwards but spread primarily in the MH III period.²³

COMPARISONS AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

We do not intend to discuss here Argive contacts with remote areas since we believe that we need to place the Argos “tumuli” first in their regional context. Indeed this point needs to be stressed because tumuli have too often been seen only as an indication of migrations and external influences while the local connections and the social needs that underlie the adoption of this burial form have not been sufficiently investigated.

The closest comparison is with Tumulus IQ of Asine, the only certain tumulus in the MH Argolid.²⁴ The similarities to Argos are that in both cases tumuli comprise parts of a broader cemetery. In Argos, tumuli seem to be established at an early date and the cemeteries around them represent largely a later expansion. In Asine the situation may have been slightly different, as graves dating to MH I-II are found

18. The Argos “Tumuli” Project is financed by the Institute of Aegean Prehistory. We would like to thank Mrs A. Banaka, Head of the 4th Ephorate, and the Ministry of Culture for granting us permission to publish the finds and skeletons from the Argos “tumuli” and to consult the excavation diaries and excavation photos held in the 4th Ephorate Archive. We are grateful to Mrs P. Marneri, who is responsible for the Archives of the 4th Ephorate, and especially to Mr. V. Giannopoulos, the *apothekarios* of the Argos Museum, whose help in locating the finds and skeletons has been invaluable. Our thanks also go to the Ephorate of Palaeoanthropology and Speleology, where the Deilaki Archive is currently held. Mrs S. Samartzidhou, the previous Head of the Ephorate, and Mrs K. Gleni-Barakari allowed us to make a preliminary examination of the Deilaki Archive. We are indebted to Dr N. Kyparissi-Apostolika, the current Head of the Ephorate, who gave us permission to consult and scan the Deilaki Archive. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs Eleni Morou who facilitated our work in many ways. This paper has benefited from many discussions with Oliver Dickinson who will be responsible for drawing together the different strands of evidence on the Argos “tumuli” graves.

19. See Triantaphyllou in Voutsaki *et al.* 2007, p. 88-89; Triantaphyllou in Voutsaki *et al.* 2009.

20. Sarri in Voutsaki *et al.* 2007, p. 85.

21. We consider here MH II the phases of Pefkakia 5 and 6, Maran 1992, p. 357-358.

22. Blegen, Wace, 1930; Caskey 1966, p. 19; Blackburn 1970, p. 9-10; Nordquist 2002; Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 24; Milka 2010.

23. For an interpretation of the changes in the mortuary practices see Voutsaki 1998; Voutsaki 1999.

24. Dietz 1980. The Asine tumulus is now being re-examined as part of the *Middle Helladic Argolid Project*; see Voutsaki *et al.*, this volume.

both in and outside the tumulus.²⁵ However, the MH III-LH I period is marked in Asine as well by a sharp increase in the number of tombs and an expansion of the burial ground.

Lerna offers a kind of precedent for the early Argos tumuli in the form of the EH III mound, erected above the destroyed House of Tiles.²⁶ However, this had no funerary function before the beginning of the Late Bronze Age.

As concerns Grave Circles A and B at Mycenae, which are partly contemporary with the late phase of the Argos cemeteries, Oliver Dickinson raises serious doubts about their designation as tumuli.²⁷ The Dendra tumulus, considered by Deilaki as MH,²⁸ may be later, *i.e.* Late Helladic; at least this is what the radiocarbon dating of one of the horse burials suggests.²⁹ We can see therefore that the Argolid differs from other regions of the southern Mainland, notably Messenia; tumuli constitute the exception rather than the norm.³⁰

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Before we reach some final conclusions, we would like to stress the limitations of our evidence; our context is full of later intrusions, while neither the boundaries of the tumuli nor the deeper layers have been reached. What are then the preliminary conclusions of our examination?

To start with the hot question: Tumuli or not? The answer cannot be a simple yes or no; just in two cases (*fig. 3* and *6*) can we talk about tumuli and both seem to belong to the early MH period. However, the majority of tombs belong to a later phase of use, broadly MH IIIB, when we seem to be dealing with loosely arranged tomb clusters. It is therefore preferable to abandon the present designation of these burial grounds as tumuli and refer to the excavated areas by the building plots in which the graves were found.³¹

We have also concluded that there are two distinct chronological phases, recognized by S. Müller in their chronological and functional sense:³² a) a first MH I-MH II period containing some very early MH elements and b) a second MH/LH period. Only in the first period are unambiguous features usually associated with attested tumuli: stone enclosure, axial arrangement, evidence for mortuary ceremonies and *pithos* burials, though not all these features are present at the same time. During the second phase, perhaps after a break in the sequence during a later stage of the MH II period, the cemetery loses its monumental character and resembles the extramural, extended cemeteries known from other Argive sites.

Traces of differentiation can be observed from the early MH period, *e.g.* in the exceptional amount of vases of the early *pithos* burial Γ 70 (12) (*fig. 7*).³³ However, the limited number of tombs does not allow firm conclusions on the nature of differentiation in this early period. During the main, late phase of the cemetery, we cannot maintain that these cemeteries were *the* burial place of the elite.³⁴ Neither the large numbers of people buried in the cemeteries nor the levels of wealth support the elite hypothesis. Some exceptional but simply constructed tombs (*fig. 9*) are clearly richer when compared to other tombs in the

25. This can be concluded both on the basis of the ceramic evidence and of the radiocarbon data obtained from some tombs. Compare Dietz 1980, p. 18, 87 with Voutsaki *et al.*, this volume and Voutsaki *et al.* 2010.

26. Caskey 1956, p. 165; Wiencke 2000, p. 297-298, 660.

27. Dickinson, this volume.

28. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, p. 200.

29. E. Pappi, personal communication.

30. For the graves in Messenia, see Boyd 2002.

31. See also Milka in Voutsaki *et al.* 2009.

32. Müller Celka 2007, p. 186.

33. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, p. 72-77.

34. See also Milka in Voutsaki *et al.* 2009.

"tumuli" cemeteries, to the intramural burials of the Aspis,³⁵ and even to most graves in other extramural Argive cemeteries of the period.³⁶ However, they cannot be compared with the splendour of the Mycenae Shaft Graves. It is important to add that the osteological analysis suggests that the people buried in the Argos tumuli had neither better health nor a richer diet than those buried in the intramural graves in the Aspis.³⁷ We therefore have to abandon the general equation "tumuli = social elite", at least in the case of the Argos cemeteries.³⁸ By far the majority of the graves are simple types (cists and pits) and most burials are accompanied by few and unspectacular offerings, mostly vases. It is, however, possible that some of the individuals buried in the cemeteries were of higher status or, at least, that they *claimed* higher status by adopting more ostentatious practices.

PERSPECTIVES

As shown by the recent discoveries from Thebes,³⁹ where new data force us to rapidly revise old views, there are still many points to be re-examined concerning the chronology, development and morphology of the tumuli of central and southern Greece but also their position in contemporary cemeteries.

In order to achieve this, we need a study of all aspects of the evidence, even from sites excavated a long time ago, revealed only partially and under difficult conditions, such as the Argos cemeteries. This kind of thorough, contextual and comparative study, taking into account the local situation, the social context and the wider regional framework, will, we hope, make an important contribution to the study of real or hypothetical tumuli.

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35. Philippa-Touchais forthcoming.

36. E.g. Prosymna (Blegen 1937), Myloi (Dietz, Divari-Valakou 1990). See also Dietz 1991, p. 132-140, 275-276.

37. Triantaphyllou in Voutsaki *et al.* 2007, p. 88-89; Triantaphyllou in Voutsaki *et al.* 2009. However, we should point out that only a limited number of skeletons (25 out of the 116) has been preserved and studied, hence the conclusions of the osteological analysis need to be treated with caution.

38. The view that sees the tumuli as the burial places of the elites is quite widespread – more recently, see Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 29, 32, 34; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, *passim*.

39. Aravantinos, Psaraki in this volume; Aravantinos, Psaraki forthcoming.

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TUMULI AND SOCIAL STATUS

A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE ASINE TUMULUS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to present the results of the recent re-examination of the Asine IQ tumulus (East Cemetery), excavated by S. Dietz in the 1970s. The following analyses have been carried out:

- a radiocarbon analysis of human bones which leads us to reconsider the accepted dating of the tumulus and the surrounding graves;
- the osteological analysis and stable isotopes analysis which give information on the age and sex of the deceased, but also on pathologies and diet;
- the analysis of the mortuary practices attested in the tumulus, which includes a comparison with the burials located among houses in other parts of the site (the Lower Town on the Kastraki promontory and Barbouna on the opposite hill).

In this paper, we will attempt to reconstruct the history of use of the tumulus and establish the health status, demographic profile and social position of the people buried in it. We will also reflect on the function and significance of the tumulus, a conspicuous funerary monument placed further away from the contemporary settlement.

INTRODUCTION

The ancient site of Asine is located in the south eastern part of the Argolid (*fig. 1*), on the rocky promontory Kastraki which protrudes out into the sea east of the modern village of Tolo. Kastraki was excavated by a Swedish team under the direction of Axel W. Persson and Otto Frödin between 1922 and 1930.¹ The field work revealed the existence of considerable habitations of the Early, Middle and Late Bronze Age (*table 1*) and of the Iron Age and the Hellenistic period.

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The analysis has been carried out as part of a 5-year multidisciplinary project, the *Middle Helladic Argolid Project*, financed by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. The re-examination of the skeletal material from Asine has been funded with Research Grants from the Institute of Aegean Prehistory. We would like to thank the former and current Ephors at the 4th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Mrs Z. Aslamatzidou and Mrs A. Banaka, and the Department of Conservation, Ministry of Culture, for granting us permission to examine and take samples from the Middle Helladic human skeletons of Asine. We thank the Swedish Institute at Athens, Prof. Dr C.-G. Styrenius and Prof. Dr R. Hägg for granting us the permission to sample the skeletons from the East Cemetery and Barbouna. We would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the staff at the 4th Ephorate, particularly Mrs E. Pappi. The guards of the Nauplion

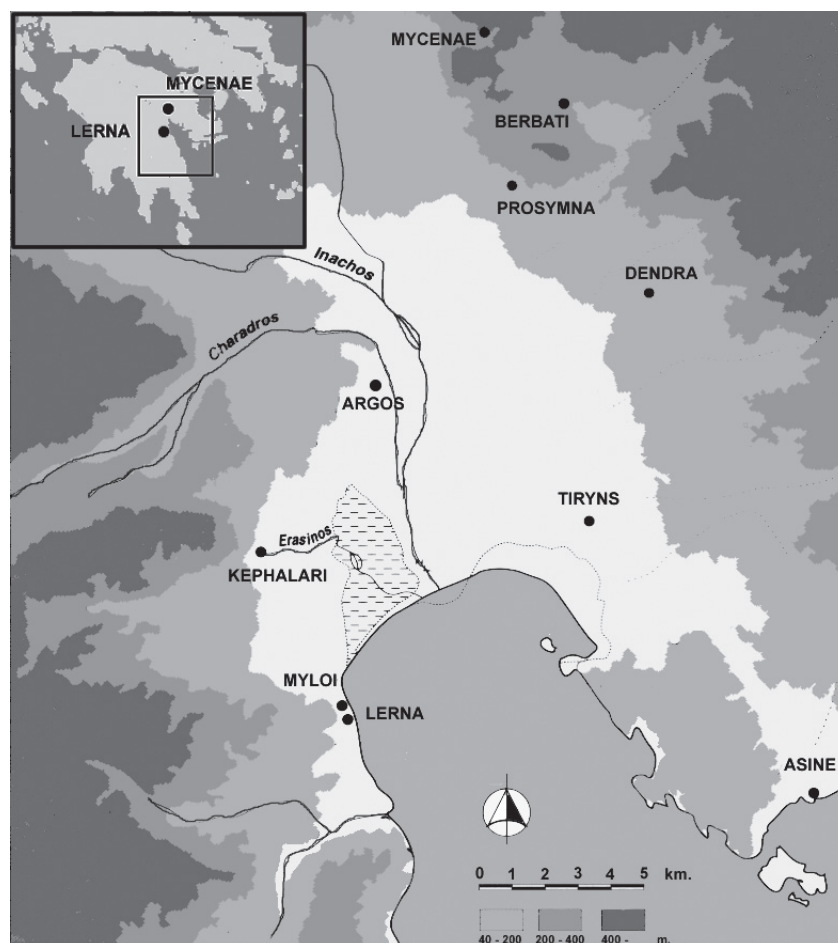


Fig. 1 – Map of the Argolid with main MH sites.

Period	Periodization in the mainland	Approx. dates
Early Bronze Age	Early Helladic period	3000 B.C.-2100 B.C.
Middle Bronze Age	Middle Helladic period	2100 B.C.-1700 B.C.
Late Bronze Age	Late Helladic, or Mycenaean period	1700 B.C.-1100 B.C.

Table 1 – Chronological diagram: the Aegean Bronze Age.

Besides excavation on Kastraki, the 1920s expedition investigated the Barbouna hill to the northwest of the promontory, where the Middle Bronze Age settlement later expanded. Further rescue excavations conducted during the 1970s by Carl-Gustaf Styrenius and Søren Dietz to the east of the promontory revealed continuous use of the area from the Middle Bronze Age with the East Cemetery in the bottom,² partly covered by ground water, to Iron Age and Hellenistic levels.³ In the same decade the lower slopes of

Museum were particularly helpful during our study; we thank them all. The samples have been taken by Dr Anne Ingvarsson-Sundström, with assistance by Dr S. Triantaphyllou. Finally, we are grateful to the editors for their patience. For the aims and methods of the project, see Voutsaki 2005, or visit the website of the project: <http://MHArgolid.nl>. For the relative chronology we follow Dietz 1991. See also recently Voutsaki, Dietz, Nijboer 2010.

1. Frödin, Persson 1938.
2. Dietz 1980.
3. Dietz 1982.

the Barbouna hill were investigated further by Inga and Robin Hägg.⁴ The area was occupied in different periods, but here we will single out the houses and graves belonging to MH III-LH I.⁵ Table 2 shows the basic sub-divisions of the MH and LH period during the period covered in this paper.

Period	Period abbreviated	Approx. dates
Middle Helladic I	MH I	2100-1900 B.C.
Middle Helladic II	MH II	1900-1800 B.C.
Middle Helladic III	MH III	1800-1700 B.C.
Late Helladic I	LH I	1700-1600 B.C.
Late Helladic II	LH II	1600-1400 B.C.
Late Helladic IIIA	LH IIIA	1400-1300 B.C.

Table 2 – The period covered in this paper: the ceramic sequence and approximate dates.

The MH period is thus attested in all three areas investigated in the site of Asine (fig. 2).⁶ On Kastraki and on the lower slopes of Barbouna both settlement remains and graves were attested, while in the area east of Kastraki only the East Cemetery is found with no traces of habitation nearby. However, the three areas were not used for burial throughout the period. As can be seen in table 3, in MH I-MH II graves are cut in between (usually ruined) houses in Kastraki, while at some point, probably in MH II, the extramural

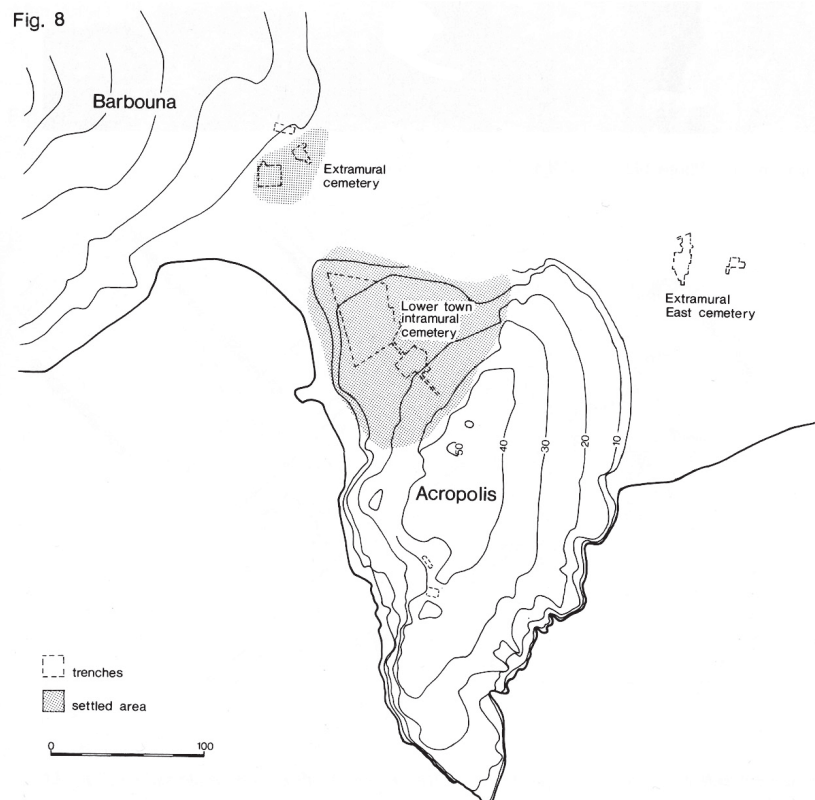


Fig. 2 – The site of Asine (from Nordquist 1987, fig. 8).

4. *Idem.*

5. Nordquist 1987; Nordquist n.d. a; Nordquist n.d. b.

6. Nordquist 1987.

East Cemetery (including the tumulus) comes into use and remains in use into the Mycenaean period (probably LH II). In MH III, graves are also opened amidst disused houses on Barbouna, while the practice of intramural burial in Kastraki declines during the early Mycenaean period.

	MH I	MH II	MH III	LH I A	LH II	LH III A
Kastraki	X	X	X	?	-	-
East Cemetery	-	X	X	X	X	?
Barbouna	-	-	X	X	-	-

Table 3 – Periods of use of the different burial areas in Asine.

We see therefore, that the three burial areas overlap in the last phase of the MH and the early LH period. This is a period of rapid social change in the southern Greek mainland,⁷ expressed primarily in the mortuary practices which undergo a pervasive transformation. In the MH I-II period burials are as a rule single, contracted inhumations, accompanied by few, if any, offerings, in simple graves (pits, cists, some jar burials), placed in between usually abandoned houses.⁸ In the MH III-LH I period the use of extramural cemeteries spreads, graves become larger and more complex, re-use of graves and secondary treatment of earlier burials are introduced, and more offerings are deposited with the dead.⁹ In this period some extraordinarily rich graves are found, notably in the two Grave Circles of Mycenae,¹⁰ which were certainly the burial places of the Mycenae elite.

To return to Asine: the main question addressed in this paper is whether the use of different burial areas in Asine between MH II and LH II was dictated by social reasons. To put it differently: were there differences of social status between the people buried in Kastraki, Barbouna and the tumulus in the East Cemetery? Did the people buried in the tumulus belong to the Asine elite?

THE EAST CEMETERY: DESCRIPTION AND CHRONOLOGY

Fig. 3 depicts the tumulus cemetery as excavated.¹¹ The tumulus consisted of two covers of which the lower one was in very poor condition. The better preserved upper cover consisted of larger rounded stones placed neatly in a kind of polygonal pattern. The centre was found empty without any traces of a structure. The tumulus was almost totally excavated, and it was suggested that it was originally circular with a diameter of 8m. In addition, some stones placed in rows in the northern and southern part of the excavation were interpreted as parts of a *peribolos* (a circular enclosure, in this case not fully concentric with the tumulus) with a diameter of 15m, which originally may have indicated the border of the cemetery. The burial ground was overlaid by an artificial pebble-filled layer which respected the *peribolos*, and probably, protected the burial ground.¹²

The history of the tumulus cemetery was reconstructed as follows:¹³ the tumulus was probably erected in the early MH II period, to which the lower stone cover and the reconstructed *peribolos* were dated. The upper stone cover was thought to have been added later, probably during late MH II; some of the cist graves which opened onto it have been dated to this period. Cist graves found at the edges of the cemetery were

7. Voutsaki 1998; Voutsaki 2005; Wright 2008.

8. Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 23-40.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 41-60.

10. Karo 1930-33; Mylonas 1973.

11. Dietz 1980, p. 70.

12. *Stratum* 12 in Dietz 1982, p. 69-70, 83, plan VIII (sections).

13. Dietz 1980, p. 71-88.

considered late MH II-MH III, because they were stratigraphically later than the reconstructed *peribolos*. Some other graves outside the tumulus contained datable offerings and could be dated to MH III-LH IA. Finally, two LH II vases were found in the northern periphery of the tumulus, and were interpreted as representing a last visit to the burial ground.

Our re-examination of the East Cemetery included a radiocarbon analysis of human samples from graves inside and outside the tumulus.¹⁴ The analysis has led us to reconsider the dates of individual graves and, to a certain extent, the overall history of the tumulus. The tumulus must have been built at some point in MH I-II, probably in MH II. This means that it constitutes, together with tumulus A and the early tomb groupings in the so-called “tumuli” B and Γ in Argos,¹⁵ the first extramural cemeteries to come into use in the Argolid and among the earliest in the whole of the southern mainland. Interestingly, graves datable to this period (a double burial in a *pithos*, or large storage jar outside the tumulus; a cist inside the tumulus)

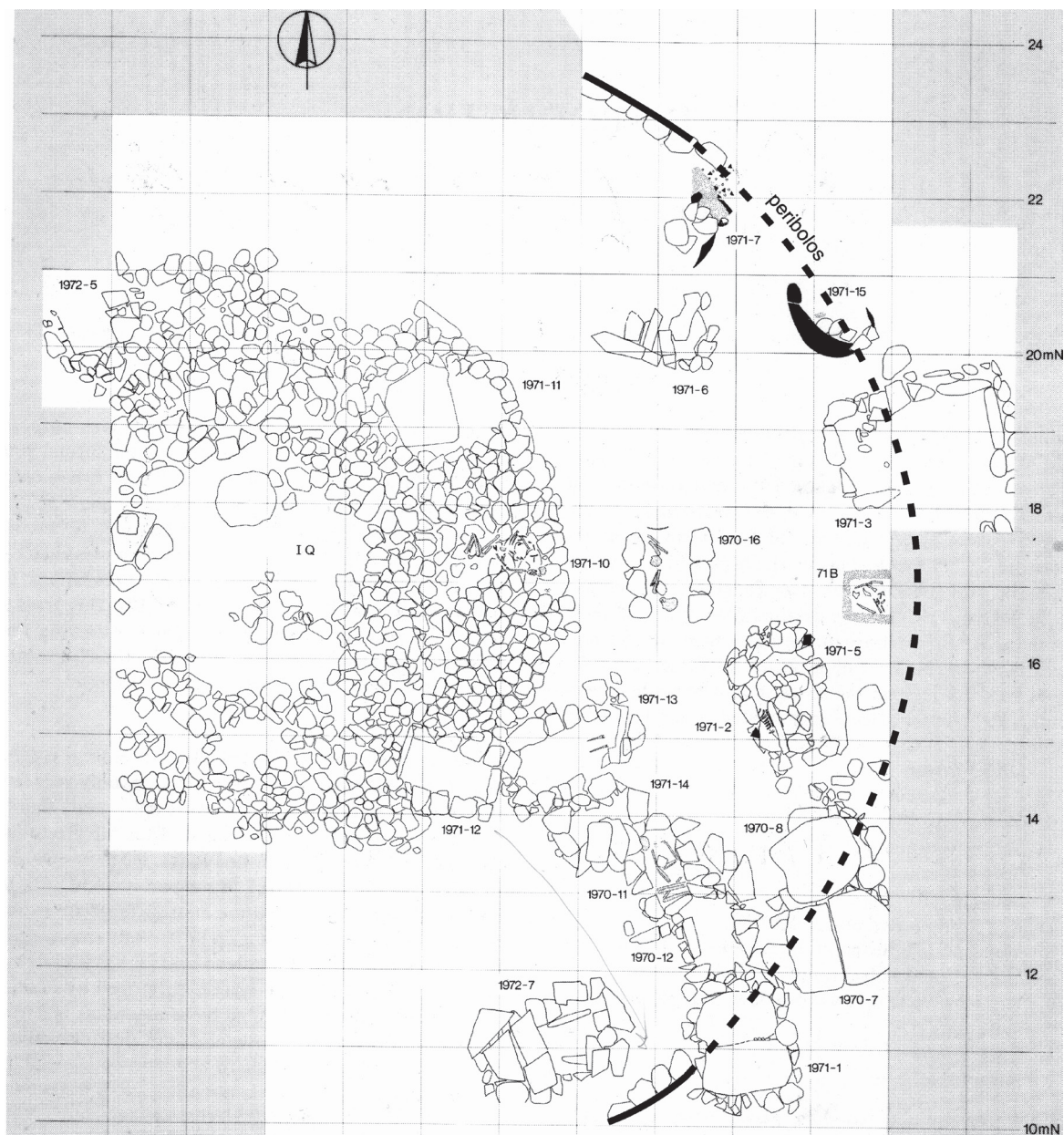


Fig. 3 – The East Cemetery and the tumulus (from Dietz 1980, fig. 3).

14. Voutsaki *et al.* 2010.

15. See Sarri, Voutsaki in this volume.

are found both inside and outside the tumulus. The double burial is accompanied by four vases – which is certainly uncommon in this early period when most graves are unfurnished. No other offerings were found in these earlier graves.

The number of graves increased sharply in MH III-LH IA,¹⁶ though in essence mortuary practices did not change considerably. Graves are still placed both inside and outside the tumulus. Most graves are cist graves containing single, contracted inhumations and the majority contained few or no offerings. However, some notable exceptions (listed in *table 4*) exist. Interestingly, all these graves belong to the later phases of the East Cemetery.

Grave No.	Date	Pottery	Non-ceramic offerings
1970-12 ¹⁷	MH III	No	Golden diadem Iron nail (!), found in the grave fill
1970-7	MH III	No	2 bronze rings
1971-10	MH III	Kantharos	Bronze knife Gold ring
1971-3	LH I	16 vases	Bronze dagger and a limestone pommel

Table 4 – Graves with non-ceramic offerings in the East Cemetery.

1971-3, the richest tomb, is among the latest graves in the sequence. It should be pointed out that this is a large cist grave (the largest grave in the cemetery, indeed in Asine as a whole), and that the deceased was placed in extended position. It should be added that small, unfurnished cist graves are also opened in this period.

The radiocarbon analysis suggests that the East Cemetery was more intensively used in LH II than hitherto thought. The two LH II stray vases found on the periphery of the tumulus were interpreted as representing a last visit to the tomb,¹⁸ but the ¹⁴C analysis indicates that another two burials, one cist grave outside the tumulus and a child burial deposited above an earlier grave may belong to the LH II period.¹⁹ This tallies well with the evidence from other extramural cemeteries (Argos,²⁰ Prosymna,²¹ Prehistoric Cemetery at Mycenae²²) where the groupings of cists and pits are gradually, in the course of LH I-LH II, abandoned in favour of “family” tombs, such as chamber tombs and tholos tombs. The cemetery was afterwards abandoned and finally destroyed at the very end of the Mycenaean period.

MORTUARY PRACTICES AND SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION IN MH-EARLY LH ASINE²³

Asine gives us a unique opportunity to study differentiation between the three burial grounds used by the inhabitants of the same settlement; the graves among houses in Kastraki and Barbouna, and the formal East Cemetery to the east of the settlement. Previous studies considered both the East Cemetery and the Barbouna

16. This corresponds to a general pattern across the southern mainland: the switch in MH III-LH I to extramural, formal cemeteries placed at a distance from the settlement. See Voutsaki 1998 for an explanation of the phenomenon.

17. 1970-12 was originally dated to MH II by Dietz (Dietz 1980, p. 83-84, 88), but the results of the radiocarbon analysis make a date in MH III more likely.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 87-88.

19. In fact, the child burial *may* even belong to the LH IIIA period.

20. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980; Voutsaki, Sarri, Dickinson *et al.* 2009; Sarri, Voutsaki in this volume.

21. Blegen 1937; Voutsaki, Ingvarsson-Sundström, Richards 2009.

22. Alden 2000; Voutsaki, Ingvarsson-Sundström, Richards 2009.

23. The discussion is based on the analysis carried out by E. Milka (Milka 2006; Milka n.d.) though we sometimes reach different conclusions.

graves as extramural and compared them with the intramural graves of all periods found at Kastraki.²⁴ Here a different approach is adopted because the schematic distinction between intramural and extramural graves does not do full justice to the complexity of the situation in the MH period.²⁵ So-called intramural graves are in most cases opened in between houses or cut into abandoned houses.²⁶ While a few graves in Kastraki may have been opened under houses in use at the time, it is very clear that in Barbouna (and in many cases in Kastraki as well) the graves are dug into the ruins of abandoned houses. In addition some graves are opened in the general settlement area, but in parts not used for habitation, *e.g.* in the Acropolis (the top of the promontory) at Kastraki.²⁷ Therefore, the comparison here will be simply between the three burial areas, rather than between “extramural” and “intramural” graves.

The comparison will be undertaken in three stages; we will first compare the (few) MH II graves of the East Cemetery with the MH I-II graves found in Kastraki. Then we will compare the MH III-LH I East Cemetery graves with the MH III graves in Kastraki and the MH III-LH I graves in Barbouna. Finally, a few remarks will be made about the last (LH II) graves of the East Cemetery. Of course, the comparison encounters many problems; many graves in Kastraki are unfurnished and cannot be dated closely.²⁸ Or, at times we are dealing with small numbers of graves and, as a result, only tentative observations can be made. Nevertheless, some very interesting contrasts between the three burial areas are emerging.

The following aspects of the mortuary evidence will be taken into account: the grave types used in each cemetery, the offerings accompanying the dead and the mode of disposal of the deceased.

MH I-MH II period

Only two East Cemetery graves can be dated with certainty (*i.e.* based on stylistic observations on the ceramic offerings and/or on radiocarbon results) to the earlier phase of its use, probably the MH II period. The *pithos* burial 1971-7 may also belong to this period because of its similarities with and proximity to 1971-15. Finally, a fourth grave (71B) may be the earliest grave of the cemetery because it was found at great depth. The graves are listed in *table 5*.

Tomb number	Type of grave	Burial treatment	Burial ²⁹	Offerings
1971-15	<i>Pithos</i> burial	Scanty remains of two skeletons, position unknown	Young adult, sex unknown Young adult, female	Bowl as cover. 2 cups, jar.
1971-12	Stone-built cist	Single, contracted	Child, 9-10 years	-
1971-7	<i>Pithos</i> burial	Double burial, position unknown	Juvenile Prime Adult, female	-
71B (?)	Mudbrick cist	Secondary burials, number unknown	Not known	-

Table 5 – MH I-MH II graves in the East Cemetery.

24. Nordquist 1987, p. 101; Nordquist 2002, p. 24-25.

25. This point has been emphasized by Milka 2010.

26. As already noted by Nordquist 1987, p. 95.

27. Nordquist 1987, p. 9; Milka n.d.

28. Only the graves that can be dated will be included in the discussion here.

29. The age and sex identifications are based on the recent re-examination carried out by Anne Ingvarsson-Sundström (see below), and therefore deviate sometimes from Angel's (1982) identifications. See Ingvarsson-Sundström in Voutsaki *et al.* 2006; Ingvarsson-Sundström in Voutsaki *et al.* 2007.

Grave types: jar burials are attested among the early graves in Kastraki, although they are not common; 2-3 out of 34 graves datable to the early MH phases are jar burials.³⁰ It should be noted that the jars varied between 0.36 and 0.75m in height.³¹ In contrast, 1971-15 and 1971-7 are *pithos* burials, *i.e.* were placed in large storage containers whose height reached 1.20m.³² Jar burials in Kastraki are used exclusively for single sub-adult burials, while both *pithos* burials in the East Cemetery are double adult (or juvenile and adult) burials.

While stone-built cists are common in Kastraki (and as we will see below, they are the norm also during the later phases of the East Cemetery), mudbrick cists are found rarely (only one undated and one MH III mudbrick cist have been found in Kastraki).³³

It is interesting, finally, that the majority of contemporary graves in Kastraki are simple pits, while pits are totally missing from the East Cemetery in this period.³⁴

Treatment of the body: we have already pointed out that both *pithoi* in the East Cemetery contain double adult burials – something fairly exceptional in this early period. If 71B indeed dates to this early period, the practice of secondary treatment constitutes another exceptional practice attested in the East Cemetery. However, the single, contracted child burial in the cist could easily have been found in Kastraki.

Offerings: few offerings, namely the few vases from the 1971-15, are deposited in this period. However, if we compare them with the offerings deposited in the Kastraki graves in the MH I-II, we can observe that a much smaller proportion of graves receive any offerings at all; only 4 out of 34 graves contained one single vase.³⁵

MH III-LH I period

Type of tomb: only cists (and one pit) are found in the East Cemetery in this period. As we can see in table 6, the percentage of cists found in the East Cemetery is higher than that found in Barbouna or in Kastraki. However, as we pointed out above, pit graves are mainly used during this period for sub-adults, who are usually buried in graves among houses.³⁶ The only pit in the tumulus, cut into the earthen mound, belonged to an adult man and contained a bronze knife and a golden ear-ring.

If we examine the size of cists, those found in the East Cemetery (0.85m-1.40m long) and in Barbouna (0.85m-1.50m long) are larger than those in Kastraki (1.00m-1.15m long for adults and 0.47m-0.74m long for sub-adults).³⁷ We have already pointed out that the largest (and also the richest) grave of all three burial areas was cist grave 1971-3 (2.00m x 1.00m x 0.50m).

	East Cemetery	Kastraki	Barbouna
Pits	1	11	5
Cists	10	8	10
Jar burials	0	2	0
<i>Pithos</i> burials	0	0	0

Table 6 – Types of graves used in MH III-LH IA Asine.

30. Milka n.d.

31. *Ibid.*

32. 1971-15 was 1.20m long; 1971-7 was only partly preserved.

33. Milka n.d.

34. As we will see below (section 4), pits in Kastraki are often used for neonates which are under-represented in the East Cemetery.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.* see n. 34, and section 4 below.

37. *Ibid.*

No burial *pithoi* are found in the East Cemetery in this period. In contrast, jar burials are still found among the Kastraki graves, while the practice of burying (neonates, infants, children) in jars is abandoned in other settlements.³⁸

Mode of disposal: single burials represent the norm in all three burial grounds. However, some double burials are attested, the majority of which are found in the East Cemetery. The double burial of an adult woman with a neonate (1972-5) is dated to MH III-LH I on the basis of its radiocarbon result, while another double burial of an adult man (1972-7) and an infant cannot be closely dated. One possible double burial (child-adult) and three MH III double neonate burials have been found in Barbouna. In Kastraki, a double (adult man with adult woman) burial is certainly dated to MH III, while a couple of adult-neonate burials cannot be closely dated. Double burials are therefore more common in the East Cemetery and in Barbouna than in Kastraki.

On the other hand, the new practice which is introduced in this period, the re-use of graves and the secondary treatment of earlier burials, is only attested in one grave in Barbouna. No certain cases of secondary treatment have been found in the East Cemetery.³⁹

Grave offerings: in all three burial grounds a general increase in the proportion of graves containing offerings can be observed. This is a general phenomenon that can be observed across the southern mainland in this period.⁴⁰ As we can see on *table 7*, the percentage of graves with offerings was higher in the East Cemetery and in Barbouna than in Kastraki. In terms of quantity and diversity, however, the East Cemetery presents a more complex assemblage than Barbouna (*table 7, table 8*), even if this is largely due to the large, rich cist 1971-3. Kastraki has even fewer offerings and a much narrower repertoire. Finally, only the East Cemetery contains golden objects (golden diadem in 1970-12, golden earring in 1971-10). However, once more we need to keep in mind that unfurnished graves are still to be found in the East Cemetery in this period.

	Number of MH III-LH I graves	Graves with offerings	Number of vases	Number of non-ceramic offerings
Kastraki	21 ⁴¹	9	12	7 (5 bronze)
Barbouna	16	8	18	8 (3 bronze)
East Cemetery	10 or 11	5	22	6 (4 bronze, 2 gold)

Table 7 – Numbers of ceramic and non-ceramic offerings in the three areas in MH III-LH I.

Burial Context	Grave No.	Grave Type	Finds	Age/sex
Kastraki	MH4	Cist	1 vessel 2 bronze beads	Adult?
	MH18	Cist	4 vessels 1 shell Fish bones	Sub-adult
	MH52-53	Cist	1 vessel Bronze tweezers Bronze pin (frg)	Mature adult, male/Prime adult, female
	MH107	Pit	2 vessels Bronze razor Obsidian arrowhead	Adult?

38. *E.g.* in Lerna: Blackburn 1970.

39. However, some caution is necessary; many skeletons were found below the ground water level and, therefore, the excavators could not always ascertain the position of skeletons.

40. Cavanagh, Mee 1998, p. 41-60; Voutsaki 1997.

41. Here only the graves certainly dated are included.

Burial Context	Grave No.	Grave Type	Finds	Age/sex
Barbouna	B12	Pit	3 vessels 1 shell	Infant
	B15	Cist	2 vessels 2 bronze rings 1 necklace: bronze, carnelian, bone beads 2 strings of shells	Child
	B30	Cist	5 vessels	Prime adult, male
	B32	Cist/Pit	4 vessels	Young adult, female?
	A89.324	Cist	3 vessels	Young adult, male
East Cemetery	1970-12	Cist	Gold diadem Iron nail (!), found in the grave fill	Adult?
	1970-7	Cist	2 bronze rings	Infant
	1971-2	Cist	2 vessels	Juvenile/adult, female?
	1971-10	Pit	1 vessel Bronze knife Golden ring	Young adult, male?
	1971-3	Cist	16 vessels Bronze dagger	Adult, male?

Table 8 – MH III-LH I graves from the three burial areas containing more than one offering.

LH II graves

As pointed out above, during the course of LH I-LH II, the traditional MH cemeteries of cists and pits are gradually abandoned and new “family” tombs, the chamber tomb and tholos tomb, used for multiple burials over a longer period, are introduced. The East Cemetery met the same fate. The few burials deposited in this period are undistinguished (*table 9*). Cist 1970-11 is a rather “old-fashioned” burial; a heavily contracted, unfurnished burial of a young man. Finally, an infant was placed on the capstone of an earlier cist containing the unfurnished burial of an adult man. While the earlier cist cannot be dated, the radiocarbon result of the infant placed it in the LH II period. The absence of offerings in these late burials is not surprising; cists and pits still in use in this period are as a rule poor. In contrast, the first chamber tomb in Asine (tomb I:7),⁴² which is built in the west Necropolis further away from the settlement in LH II, is a fairly rich tomb and the richest offerings are deposited in LH II-early LH IIIA.⁴³ In the meantime, Barbouna was not used for burials anymore since the early LHI and only few (possibly) LH burials have been found in Kastraki. By LH II, the Asine inhabitants have fully endorsed the Mycenaean way of life and death.

Grave No.	Date	Grave type	Offerings	Age / sex
1970-11	LH I-II	Cist outside the tumulus	no	Young adult, male?
1972-7b	LH II	Deposited on top of earlier cist	no	Infant

Table 9 – LH II graves in the East Cemetery.

42. Frödin, Persson 1938.

43. Voutsaki 1993, Appendix IIIB, n. 364. The tomb remains in use into the end of the Mycenaean period.

Conclusions

The foundation of the East Cemetery marks an important departure from traditional MH mortuary practices; the cemetery is opened further away from the settlement, in a hitherto uninhabited area. The use of a formal disposal area, which is demarcated with the *peribolos*⁴⁴ and made conspicuous by the use of the stone covers, pebble fill and, possibly, an earthen mound above it, already separates the group of people buried in the East Cemetery from the rest of the community. There are, however, more differences from the Kastraki graves in the early phases of use of the cemetery. In the East Cemetery cists rather than pits, and *pithoi* rather than jar burials are used; double burials and even secondary burials (?) are found; four vases are found in one tomb, while only single vases are deposited in a few tombs in Kastraki.⁴⁵ The situation in MH III-LH I becomes more complex. The differences between Kastraki and the East Cemetery become deeper because of the (almost exclusive) use of cists, the more diverse and rich funerary assemblage and the presence of golden objects in the latter. The differences with the Barbouna graves are less pronounced. In Barbouna, cists predominate but there are also some pits. There are a few small bronze and precious stone ornaments but no golden ones. On the other hand, re-use and secondary treatment are certainly attested in Barbouna but not (as far as it could be established)⁴⁶ in the East Cemetery. There is, therefore, evidence for differentiation between the group buried in the East Cemetery and those buried in Kastraki, while the differences with the group buried in Barbouna are less pronounced.

The question is: what is the nature of this differentiation? Current debates in archaeological theory question the idea that energy expenditure or wealth deposited in graves directly reflects social status held in life.⁴⁷ Therefore we should not automatically attribute the differences between the Asine burial areas to social differences and certainly not conceive these as rigid divisions in a static social system. On the other hand, studies of the transformation of mortuary practices in the unstable MH III-LH I period have conclusively demonstrated that conspicuous consumption at death had become a major social strategy for the *creation* of power and prestige.⁴⁸ We may therefore conclude that the social group using the East Cemetery expressed not so much its social status but rather its claims on status by burying its relatives or other members of the group in a distinct and conspicuous cemetery and by placing rich finds in (some of) the graves. However, mortuary practices across the social body undergo a transformation in this period and, therefore, the contrasts between the East Cemetery and the other burial grounds, especially with Barbouna, are less pronounced in this period.

A comparison with other extramural cemeteries may help us to place the East Cemetery group in the fluid social conditions of the period and to understand better the process of emulation and transformation of the mortuary practices. In MH II we see in Argos developments similar to those in Asine: the foundation of extramural cemeteries, in at least one case associated with a tumulus, *pithos* burials and rich ceramic offerings.⁴⁹ In MH III-LH I, as we have repeatedly pointed out, extramural cemeteries appear in many settlements, and there is a general increase in the elaboration of mortuary forms (larger, more complex tombs) and practices (re-use, secondary treatment, etc.) as well as in the deposition of both pottery and valuables in the tombs. Within this wider frame, the cist grave 1971-3 becomes less exceptional. The comparison is not so much with the Grave Circles of Mycenae⁵⁰ – it is obvious that the East Cemetery pales in comparison with the enormous array of exotic, valuable, elaborate, unique offerings deposited in

44. Even if this *peribolos* was not really respected during the period of use of the cemetery.

45. See also Nordquist 1990, p. 39. Here our conclusions differ somewhat from those reached by Milka, in Voutsaki *et al.* 2007, p. 76-80, largely because our analysis is based on the revised dating of the tombs.

46. See *supra*, n. 35.

47. *I.a.* Hodder 1982. For a general discussion on the development of mortuary studies in archaeology see Parker Pearson 1999.

48. Voutsaki 1997; Voutsaki 1999.

49. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980; Voutsaki, Sarri, Dickinson *et al.* 2009; Sarri, Voutsaki in this volume.

50. Karo 1930-1933; Mylonas 1973.

the Mycenae Grave Circles. But even if we compare the East Cemetery with other extramural cemeteries, *e.g.* with those in Myloi-Lerna,⁵¹ Prosymna,⁵² Argos,⁵³ or the Prehistoric Cemetery at Mycenae,⁵⁴ it becomes indeed obvious that despite the presence of some richer finds, the East Cemetery burials are not exceptional. A detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this article but some general observations can be made. If we examine only the diversity and quality of funerary offerings, some differences between sites exist – there are, for instance, some graves comparable with and even richer than the East Cemetery in Argos and in the Prehistoric Cemetery at Mycenae. However, if we examine funerary wealth also in combination with tomb elaboration and the complexity of mortuary rites a much more complex picture emerges, characterized by subtle differences and changes through time, and an absence of unambiguous correlations and clear gradation. The social group buried in the East Cemetery is not the only one which oscillates between the traditional MH practices and the novel practices of re-use, secondary treatment and ostentatious disposal of valuables. All communities in the Argolid (and in fact, in the entire southern mainland) are caught in this process of transformation, competition and emulation which inaugurates new political formations: the small principalities of the early Mycenaean period.

We can therefore conclude that innovation in mortuary practices, of which the adoption of the tumulus form is only one aspect, is not simply the expression of social status but part and parcel of the social strategies that bring about social change and cause the transformation of the mainland societies.

Having examined the mortuary practices, it is time to explore differentiation in Asine from another angle: the osteological evidence.

THE BIOARCHAEOLOGY OF THE EAST CEMETERY

Some of the human remains recovered in the old excavations were first published by Fürst,⁵⁵ and later by Angel.⁵⁶ A number of the sub-adult individuals from Kastraki,⁵⁷ and more recently the skeletons recovered in the East Cemetery as well as those found in the Barbouna graves have been re-examined with up-to-date methods in bioarchaeology.⁵⁸ The aim of the osteological re-analysis is to examine whether the group of people buried in the East Cemetery differed from those buried at Kastraki and Barbouna in terms of their demographic composition as well as their pathological and dietary characteristics.

Preservation and demography

The bioarchaeological analysis of the 24 skeletons from the East Cemetery is severely hampered by poor preservation of the skeletons and occasional commingling of bones from different burials; in 9 graves the presence of additional bones or bones with different morphology show an admixture of bones between burials. Whether this happened before or after excavation is seldom possible to discern, although post-excavation mishaps seem to have occurred in a number of cases.

51. Dietz, Divari-Valakou 1990.

52. Blegen 1937; Voutsaki, Ingvarsson-Sundström, Richards 2009.

53. Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980. The presence of tumuli is very uncertain, as argued by Sarri, Voutsaki in this volume; Milka in Voutsaki, Sarri, Dickinson *et al.* 2009.

54. Alden 2000; Voutsaki, Ingvarsson-Sundström, Richards 2009.

55. Fürst 1930.

56. Angel 1982. Unfortunately many of the skeletons from the old excavations in Kastraki are now lost.

57. Ingvarsson-Sundström 2008; Nordquist, Ingvarsson-Sundström 2005.

58. Ingvarsson-Sundström in Voutsaki *et al.* 2007, p. 70-76; Ingvarsson-Sundström 2010; Ingvarsson-Sundström *et al.* 2009.

If we now turn to demographic composition, *fig. 4* shows that there is a fairly equal representation of females and males in the skeletal sample, although 4 individuals could not be determined as to sex because of the poor preservation of sex-characteristics. Furthermore, 5 of the 17 adults could not be assigned to an age group because of the poor preservation of age characteristics.

While the age distribution in the graves located at Kastraki and Barbouna shows a high neonatal mortality, “neonates” are strikingly under-represented in the East Cemetery graves (*fig. 5*). It is possible that individuals dying close to birth were excluded from burial within this formal cemetery as a result of general changes in burial customs towards the end of the MH period-beginning of LH⁵⁹ or as a result of normative funerary rites of certain social/kin groupings within the Asine society.

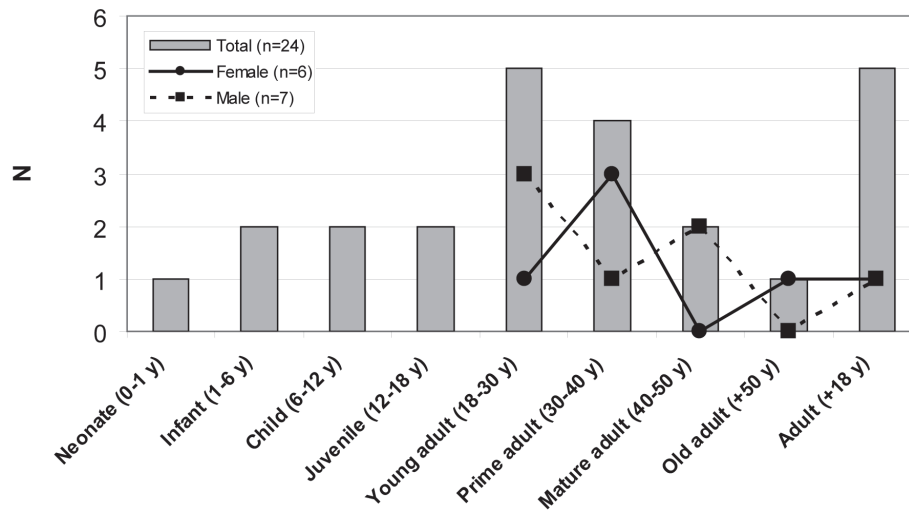


Fig. 4 – Age and sex distribution in the East Cemetery at Asine.

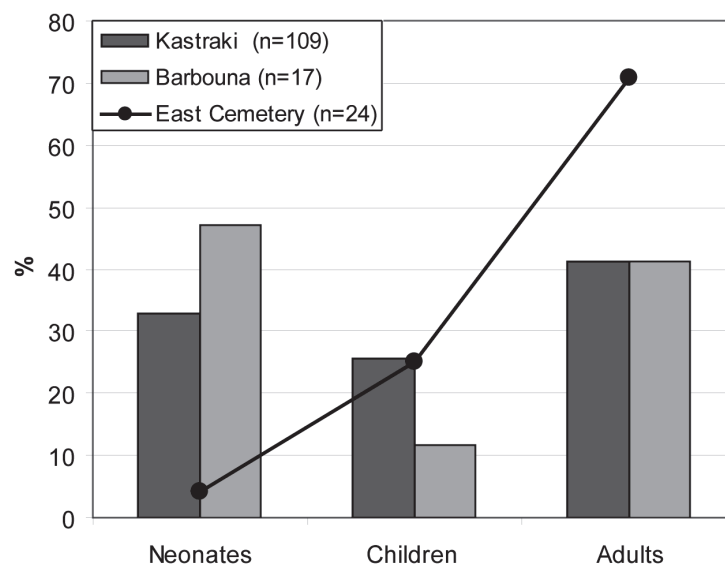


Fig. 5 – Proportional representation of neonates, children and adults at Asine.

59. Cavanagh, Mee, p. 41-60; Voutsaki 2004.

Palaeopathology and diet

There are no statistically significant differences in the prevalence of pathological conditions between the East Cemetery and the Barbouna individuals (*fig. 6*). In fact, the East Cemetery population seems generally to have slightly higher prevalence of pathological conditions compared to Barbouna, but this could depend on the fact that there are more observable skeletons at the East Cemetery. The living conditions and environmental challenges would have been basically the same for the people buried in East Cemetery as for those buried in Barbouna. For example, a high prevalence of enamel hypoplasia indicates that individuals in both samples suffered from physiological stress periods during childhood when teeth are developing.

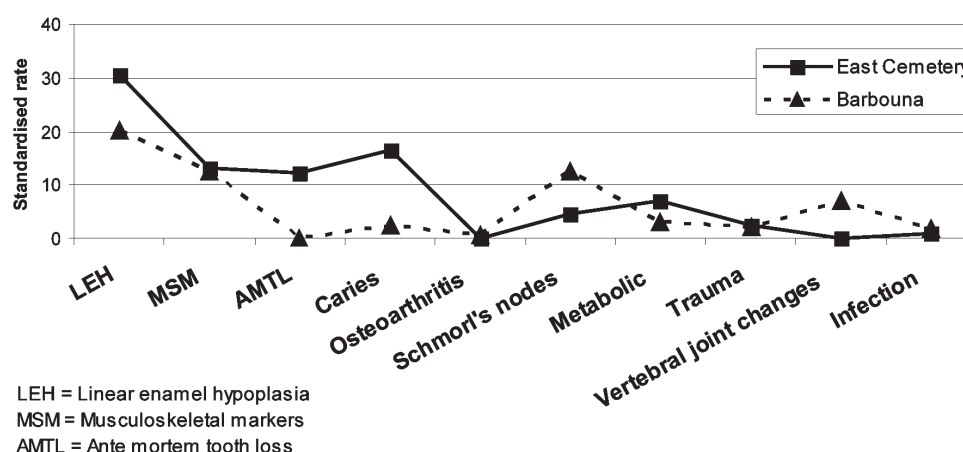


Fig. 6 – The distribution of pathologies in the East Cemetery and in Barbouna.

It is nevertheless interesting to note that while the Barbouna individuals seem to have had more vertebral pathologies (*i.e.* Schmorl's nodes and vertebral joint changes), the East Cemetery individuals have higher rates of, for example, caries and *ante mortem* tooth loss possibly pointing towards dietary differences – perhaps the consumption of, for example, sweet and sticky food such as honey and figs. The diet of the two cemetery samples were also examined by means of a stable isotope analysis.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, the comparison between the two samples was hampered by the insufficient bone collagen content of several individuals; only 1 adult from Barbouna and 9 adults from East Cemetery gave results in the analysis.

As can be seen in *fig. 7*, the East Cemetery individuals seem to have relied mainly on C3 terrestrial resources such as cereals, fruits, nuts and vegetables together with quite a lot of animal protein from meat and/or dairy products. There are no indications that C4 plants such as barley or marine protein were eaten on a regular basis. These stable isotope values are generally comparable to other Greek Bronze Age populations, especially those showing heavier reliance on animal protein such as the groups buried in Aspis, Argos⁶¹ and Grave Circle B at Mycenae.⁶²

Interestingly, the individuals in the (probably early) *pithos* grave (1971-7), a woman and a juvenile, have slightly higher nitrogen values, thus indicating a diet with more animal protein than the rest of the individuals from East Cemetery (*fig. 7*). Also the individuals in the two rich graves (1971-3 and 1970-12) seemed to have consumed quite a lot of animal protein.

60. Ingvarsson-Sundström *et al.* 2009.

61. Triantaphyllou *et al.* 2008.

62. Richards, Hedges 2008.

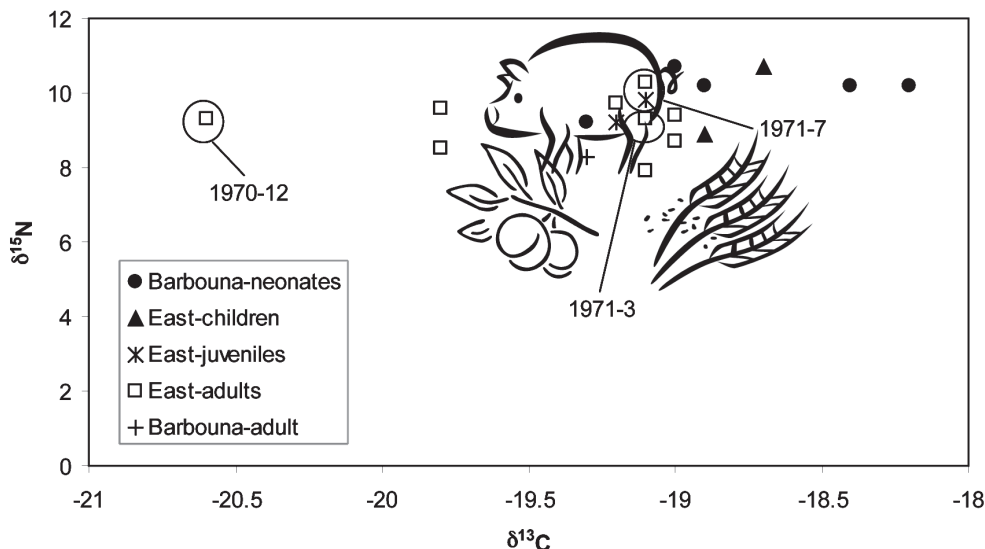


Fig. 7 – Stable isotope values from the East Cemetery and Barbouna.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the mortuary practices has allowed us to conclude that there is differentiation between the East Cemetery and the other graves in Asine, particularly those at Kastraki. The group of people using the East Cemetery chose some, but not all of the mortuary forms and practices that were being introduced during this period; in the early period the extramural location, the tumulus, and some less common mortuary forms and, in the later period, the deposition of a few valuables but neither shaft graves nor secondary treatment.

The bioarchaeological data, despite the poor preservation, confirm this general picture. In terms of demographic composition, the population in the East Cemetery differs from the populations buried in Kastraki mainly in the under-representation of neonates. The small sample size and heterogeneous preservation of the skeletons do not allow any firm conclusions regarding possible differences in health status or diet but it seems likely that the living conditions would have been similar for most individuals at Asine. However, the group buried in the East Cemetery seems to have had a diet with quite substantial amounts of animal protein in addition to foods that predisposed the individuals to caries and other oral health problems. While we do not have sufficient comparative data from Barbouna, it is of interest that the individuals buried in somewhat richer graves seem to have consumed more animal protein than other members of the same cemetery.

Despite the problems of interpretation, both archaeological and bioarchaeological data point to the same conclusion: that there was differentiation between the group buried in the East Cemetery and the rest of the community, especially the groups buried in Kastraki – but this differentiation was neither deep nor pervasive.

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DIE AUSGRABUNG VON ZWEI MITTELHELLADISCH I-ZEITLICHEN GRABTUMULI IN DER FLUR KASTROULIA BEI ELLINIKA (ALT-THOURIA) IN MESSENIEN

THE EXCAVATION OF TWO MIDDLE HELLADIC I BURIAL MOUNDS AT KASTROULIA
NEAR ELLINIKA (ANCIENT THOURIA) IN MESSENIA

Jörg RAMBACH *

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Messenien ist das Land früher Grabtumuli. Mit den MH I-zeitlichen Grabhügeln von Voidokoilia, Agios Ioannis Papoulion und Routsis hat es mit die ältesten Grabtumuli des griechischen Festlandes. Im Gegensatz zum monumentalen Charakter der Grabstätte vermittelten die in den drei genannten Tumuli vorgefundenen Gräber mit ihren sowohl quantitativ als auch qualitativ eher bescheidenen Grabbeigaben nicht den Eindruck, als hätten sie zur Grablegung einer Elite gedient. Völlig unterschiedlich waren dagegen die Verhältnisse in den beiden 2001 in Kastroulia, ca. 7 km nördlich von Kalamata, unter Mitwirkung des Autors von der zuständigen griechischen Bodendenkmalbehörde untersuchten MH I-zeitlichen Tumuli. Die Untersuchung war nach einer räumlich begrenzten Raubgrabung am südlichen (Tumulus I) der beiden Tumuli notwendig geworden, welche im übrigen bereits bei Hope Simpson und Dickinson (1979, S. 163 D137) beschrieben und als potentielle SH-Tholosgräber erachtet worden waren. Sie förderte ein zur Mehrfachbestattung genutztes Zentralgrab im südlichen und drei Einzelbestattungen an verschiedenen Stellen unter dem Erdhügel im nördlichen Tumulus (Tumulus II) zutage. Alle vier nach ihren Beigaben in MH I zu datierende Gräber mit rechteckigem bis ovalem Grundriß der beiden Tumuli waren in den festen sterilen Lehm Boden unter der künstlich aufgeschütteten Erdmasse der Hügel eingetieft. Die drei Einzelbestattungen des nördlichen Tumulus II – einer Frau, eines Mannes und eines Kleinkindes – scheinen zu Mitgliedern einer Familie zu gehören. Der Beigabenreichtum des Männergrabes, vor allem aber der des Frauengrabes, übertraf die durchschnittliche qualitative und quantitative Beigabenausstattung eines mittelhelladischen Grabes in außerordentlichem Maße. So umfaßte das Fundspektrum des Frauengrabes mehr als 30 Tongefäße unterschiedlicher Form und Größe – darunter viele mit Ritz- oder Maldekor –, die ein komplettes Geschirr-Set bildeten, welches zur Bewirtung einer größeren Tafelrunde ausgereicht hätte. Die drei Schenkgefäße, eines Fremdgut aus dem Bereich des saronischen Golfes, eines eventuell Import aus Kreta oder minoisierend und eines zur minoisierenden Keramik zählend, stellten dabei Objekte besonderen Prestiges dar. Ein Fingerring aus Bronze, zwei ritzverzierte Spinnwirtel aus Ton, Perlen aus Halbedelstein und Bein sowie vier Bronzeanhänger in der Form der minoischen Doppelaxt komplettierten die Ausstattung der Toten. Trotz der Raubgrabung im südlichen Tumulus I ließ sich noch feststellen, daß dessen Zentralgrab einst ähnlich reich mit Beigaben ausgestattet war.

ABSTRACT

Messenia is the land of the earliest burial mounds. The MH I burial mounds at Voidokoilia, Agios Ioannis Papoulion and Routsis are the most ancient in the Helladic world. In spite of the monumental character of these burial places, the funerary objects discovered within the three mounds are rather modest in quantity and quality, and do not give the impression that they were intended for an elite. However, the two MH I burial mounds at Kastroulia, about 7 km north of Kalamata, excavated by the Greek Archaeological Service in collaboration

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with the author, are quite different. The archaeological investigation became necessary after an illegal excavation of limited extent in the more southern mound (Tumulus I), which had been described by Hope Simpson and Dickinson (1979, p. 163, D 137) and was considered to potentially be a LH tholos tomb. A central tomb with many burials was discovered in the south mound and three individual burials at different points in the north mound (Tumulus II). The four graves, rectangular to oval in plan, dated to MH I by their objects, were dug in the virgin clay soil, beneath the masses of earth artificially piled up to form the two mounds. The three individual graves of mound II situated to the north – a woman, a man and a young child – appear to belong to the same family. The richness of the objects in the man's grave, but even more so in the woman's grave, surpasses by far the average quantity and quality found in a MH grave. The woman's grave contained more than thirty clay vessels of different forms and sizes (many with incised or painted decoration), forming a complete pottery assemblage which would have served many guests. Three vessels among the grave goods are particularly prestigious: a foreign product from the Saronic Gulf, a possible import or imitation from Crete, and a minoanizing vessel. A bronze ring, two incised clay spindle whorls, beads in semi-precious stone and bone as well as four bronze pendants in the form of the Minoan double axe complete the assemblage of objects for the dead. In spite of the illegal excavation in Tumulus I, it is still possible to establish that the grave goods of its central tomb were of similar richness.

Mit den MH I-zeitlichen Grabhügeln von Voidokoilia, Ajos Ioannis Papoulion¹ und Routsis² weist Messenien mit die ältesten Grabtumuli des griechischen Festlandes auf. Im Gegensatz zum monumentalen

Charakter der Grabstätte vermittelten die in den drei genannten Tumuli vorgefundenen Einzelbestattungen in großen horizontal gelagerten Grabpithoi mit ihren sowohl quantitativ als auch qualitativ eher bescheidenen Grabbeigaben nicht den Eindruck, als hätten sie zur Grablegung einer Elite gedient.

Völlig unterschiedlich waren dagegen die Verhältnisse in den beiden 2001 in der Flur von Kastroulia untersuchten MH I-zeitlichen Tumuli, die ca. 7 km nördlich von Kalamata im aufsteigenden Bergland östlich der heutigen Ortschaften Antheia und Aithaia (Ethea) und im näheren Umkreis der antiken Stadt Thouria zu lokalisieren ist³ (Abb. 1). Die Untersuchung, die von der zuständigen griechischen Bodendenkmalbehörde unter Mitwirkung des Verfassers vorgenommen wurde, war nach einer räumlich begrenzten Raubgrabung im Jahr 2000 am südlichen der beiden Tumuli, unserem Tumulus I, notwendig geworden.

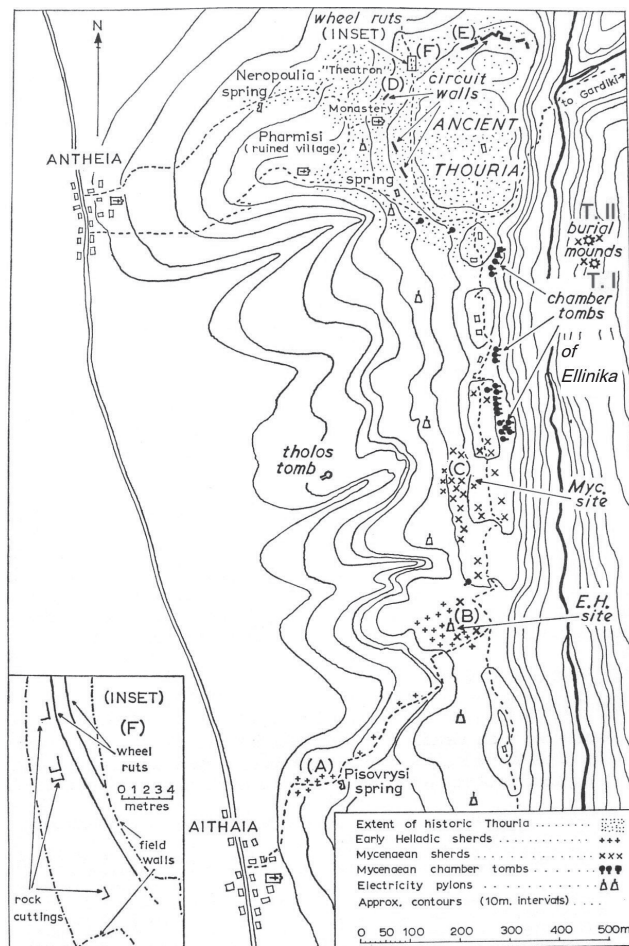


Abb. 1 – Karte der Umgebung von Alt-Thouria mit Angabe der Lage der beiden Tumuli (T I und T II) von Kastroulia (Kartenvorlage nach Hope Simpson 1966, S. 113-131, Abb. 6). Die beiden Tumuli befinden sich etwas weiter im Norden als es auf dieser Karte von 1966 angegeben ist.

1. Zu Voidokoilia und Ajos Ioannis Papoulion vgl. Korres 1978, S. 326-332; 334-359, Abb. 1-9, Taf. 197-198; S. 201-214, Plan auf Taf. IB; Korres 1979, S. 138-155, bes. 143-155, Abb. 2β.ε; 3.6 Taf. 106β; 107α-β; 112α-γ; 113ζ; Korres 1980, S. 129-150, Abb. 2-11, Taf. 105-130; Korres 1987, S. 711-743, Abb. 1-16; Korres 1990, S. 1-11, Taf. 1-4; Korres 1993, S. 235, Taf. 27a-b; 29b-d; Müller 1989, S. 20 mit Anm. 92; S. 30-33, Abb. 15; S. 36, Nr. 1.5; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1997, S. 97-98; 101-104.
2. Zur Ausgrabung des Tumulus von Kalogeropoulos-Routsis vgl. Korres 1993, S. 235 mit Anm. 38, Taf. 28b; 29e.
3. Zu einer Karte der Umgebung von Kastroulia vgl. Hope Simpson 1966, S. 113-131, Abb. 6; Rambach 2007, S. 137-150, Abb. 1.

Die beiden Tumuli befinden sich auf einem Plateau oberhalb der östlichen Steiflanke der Schlucht des Xeropotamos-Baches⁴ (Abb. 2a und 2b). Westlich der Schlucht, an deren oberem Westhang in den letzten Jahrzehnten die zahlreichen mykenischen Kammergräber der Fundstelle Ellinika⁵ aufgedeckt worden waren, zieht sich ein lang gestreckter Nord-Süd orientierter Höhenrücken hin, auf dem bei früheren Feldbegehungen ausgedehnte Fundstellen mit frühhelladischen und mykenischen Keramikresten festgestellt worden waren (Abb. 1 und 3).⁶



Abb. 2a – Blick von Alt-Thouria nach Osten über die Xeropotamos-Schlucht hinweg auf die beiden Tumuli. Im Hintergrund die Dörfer Kato- und Ano Gardiki (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

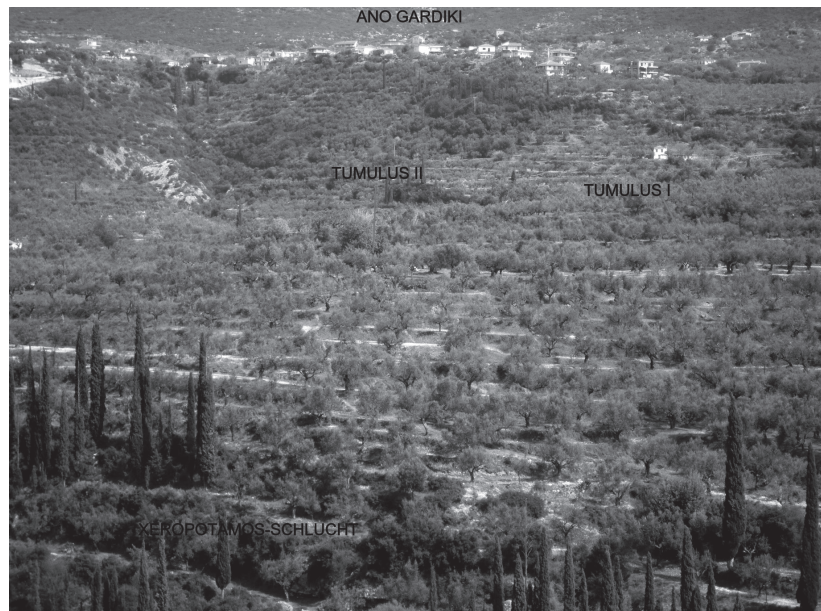


Abb. 2b – Blick von Alt-Thouria nach Osten über die Xeropotamos-Schlucht auf die Tumuli I und II von Kastroulia (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

4. Vgl. Hope Simpson 1966, S. 113 ff., Abb. 6. “burial mounds”.

5. Vgl. Arapojanni 1996, S. 190-191; Arapojanni 1997, S. 258-259; Blackman 2000-2001, S. 48; Whitley 2002-2003, S. 34.

6. Vgl. Hope Simpson 1966, S. 113 ff. mit Abb. 6; Hope Simpson, Dickinson 1979, S. 163.

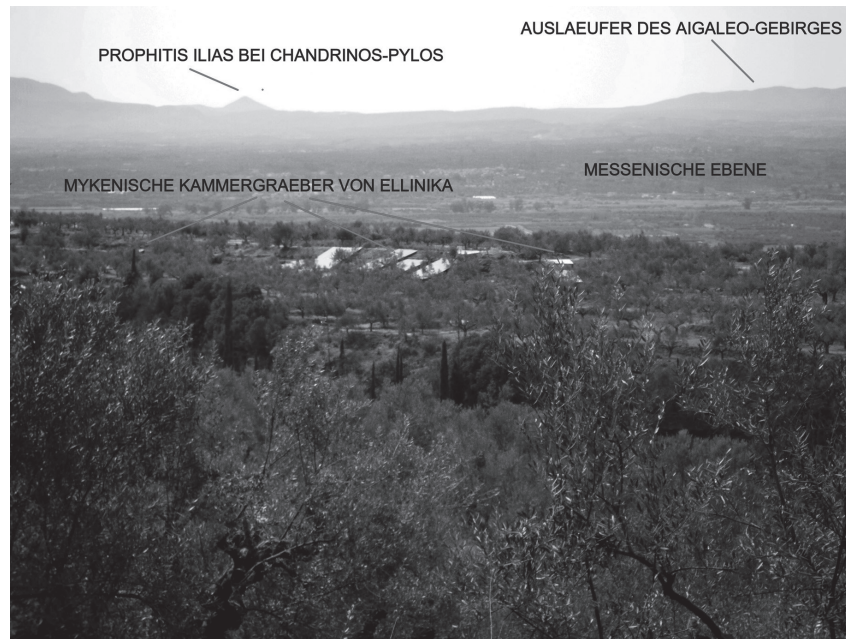


Abb. 3 – Blick von Kastroulia nach WSW über die Xeropotamos-Schlucht hinweg auf die Schutzdächer der mykenischen Kammergräber von Ellinika. Dahinter sind die messenische Ebene und ganz im Hintergrund die kegelförmige Spitze des markanten Prophitis Ilias-Berges beim Dorf Chandrinos unweit von Pylos zu erkennen (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

Auch die beiden hügelartigen Erhebungen von Kastroulia waren seit langem bekannt. So wurden sie z.B. bereits im Band von Hope Simpson und Dickinson, „A Gazetteer of Aegean Bronze Age“ des Jahres 1979 beschrieben und als potentielle mykenische Tholosgräber erachtet.⁷

Die Ausgrabung des Jahres 2001 förderte ein wohl zur Mehrfachbestattung genutztes Zentralgrab im südlichen, unserem Tumulus I (Abb. 4a), und drei räumlich getrennte Einzelbestattungen im nördlichen Tumulus, unserem Tumulus II, zutage (Abb. 5).

Alle vier nach ihren Beigaben in MH I zu datierende Gräber mit rechteckigem bis ovalem Grundriß waren in den festen sterilen Lehm Boden unter der künstlich aufgeschütteten Erdmasse der Tumuli eingetieft. Das Zentralgrab in Tumulus I (Abb. 4a) bestand aus einer großen Grube mit ovalem Grundriß, die mit senkrecht abbrechenden Seitenwänden ca. 1m tief in den sterilen Lehm untergrund unter der aufgeschütteten Hügel Erde getrieben war. Oben auf dem Grubenrand war das Grab noch mit einer Lage von großen, annähernd plattenartigen, Bruchsteinen eingefasst. Die aufgeschüttete Hügel Erde beider Tumuli enthielt riesige Mengen an Keramikfragmenten, die zu 99 Prozent auf Scherben von Früh helladisch II-Tongefäßen entfielen.⁸ Diese Tatsache hatte anfänglich die Aussicht entstehen lassen, dass die beiden Hügel zur Kategorie der extrem seltenen Früh helladisch II-Grabtumuli gehören könnten. Dem war nicht so, jedoch wurde mit diesem Keramikbefund klar, dass zur Aufschüttung der Hügel Erde aus einer nahe gelegenen zerfallenen Früh helladisch II-Siedlung herbeigeschafft worden war.

Der von modernen Eingriffen weitgehend unberührte nördliche Tumulus II konnte systematisch untersucht werden. Zwei seiner vier Grabungssektoren, die Sektoren A und B, erbrachten nur aufgeschüttetes Erdreich über dem festen natürlichen Lehm Boden.

Der südöstliche Sektor Δ erbrachte eine kleine, ovalförmig in den festen Untergrund eingetieft, flache Grabgrube, welche zur Aufnahme einer Kleinkindbestattung diente.⁹ Dieser waren zur Totenausstattung

7. Hope Simpson, Dickinson 1979, S. 163.

8. Vgl. Rambach 2007, S. 137-139 mit Anm. 7; Rambach 2003, S. 225-255, bes. 251; S. 255, Abb. 12; 13 a-c.

9. Vgl. Rambach 2007, S. 139 ff., Abb. 2.

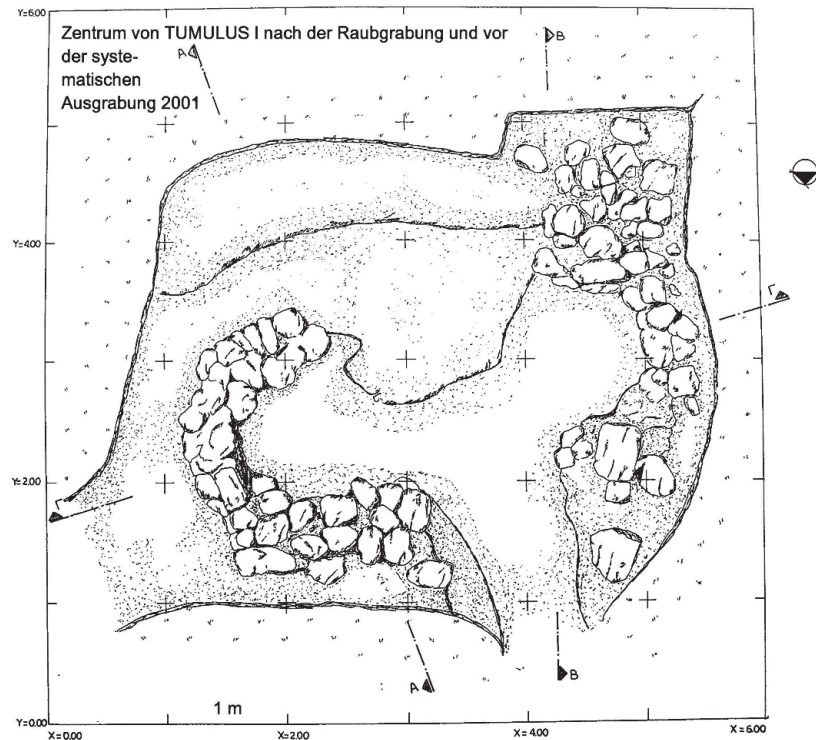


Abb. 4a – Zentrum von Tumulus I von Kastroulia nach der Raubgrabung im Jahr 2000 und vor Beginn der systematischen Ausgrabung von 2001 (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

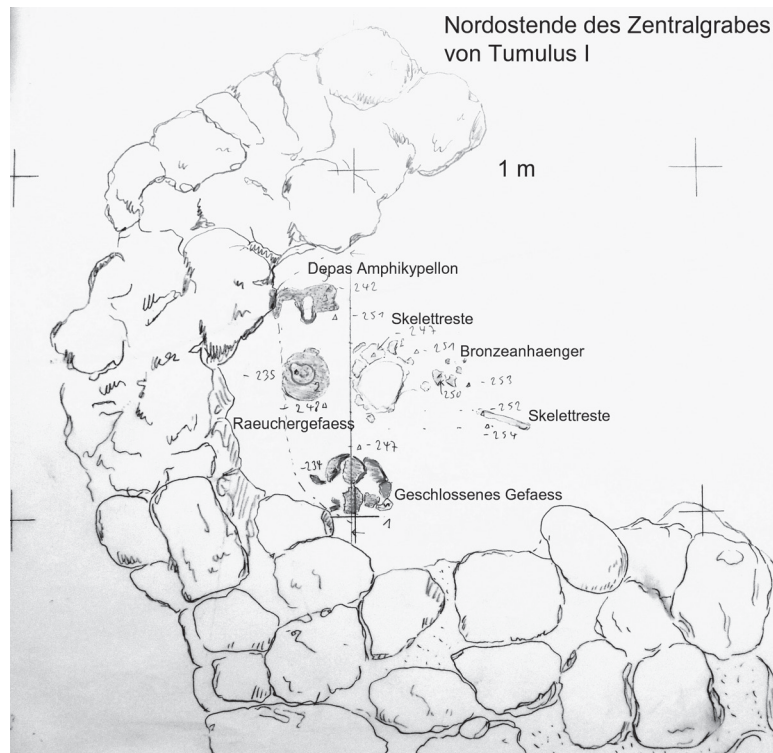


Abb. 4b – Kastroulia Tumulus I. Fundlage von drei Tongefäßen, drei Bronzeanhängern und wenigen Skelettresten in dem von der Raubgrabung unberührten Nordostende des Zentralgrabes.

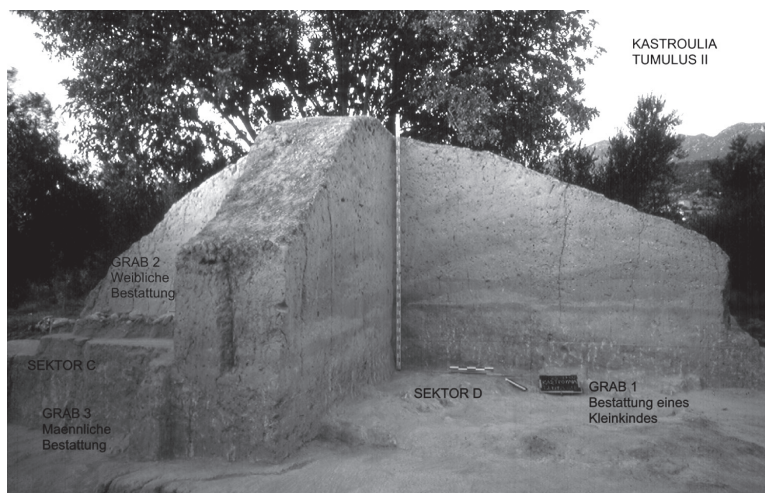


Abb. 5 – Kastroulia Tumulus II von SW. Zu erkennen sind die Grabungssektoren C (Γ) und D (Δ) mit den drei Gräbern dieses Tumulus (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

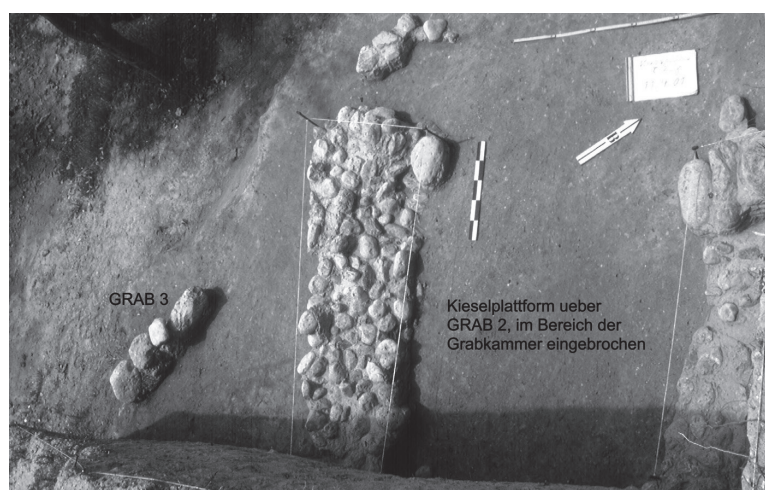


Abb. 6 – Kastroulia Tumulus II. Blick vom zentralen Steg auf Grab 2 in Sektor C (Γ). Die Grab 2 überdeckende Kieselplattform ist im Bereich des Grabraumes eingebrochen und von nachrutschender Hügel Erde bedeckt (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

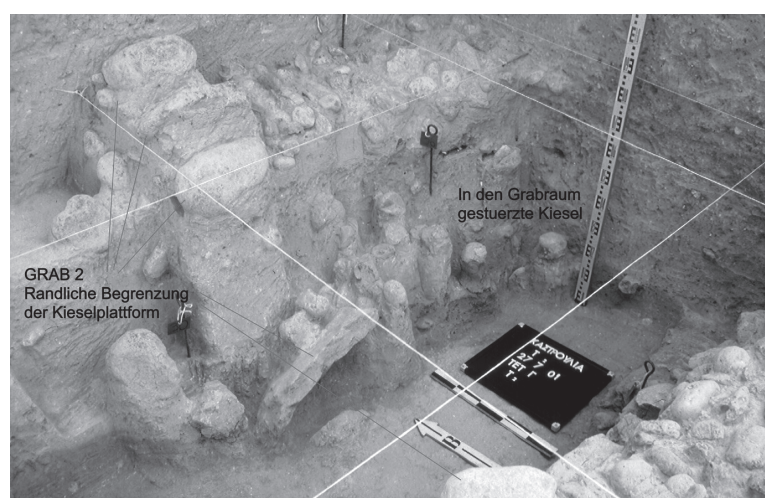


Abb. 7 – Kastroulia Tumulus II. Blick von SW auf Grab 2 mit in den Grabraum gestürzten Kiesel der Plattform (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

ein mit matter Farbe musterbemalter Kantharos und ein Krug mit acht-förmigem Ausguß beigegeben.¹⁰ Aus den Beobachtungen zur Stratigraphie in der Erdmasse des Hügels geht hervor, dass zuerst über diesem Kindergrab ein kleiner Erdhügel mit einer Steinmarkierung an dessen Spitze angehäuft worden war (*Abb. 5*). Erst später, vermutlich nur unwesentlich später, war dieser kleine Grabhügel in MH I vom Erdmantel des großen, ursprünglich mindestens 10m oder mehr im Basisdurchmesser weiten Tumulus II überdeckt worden.

Im südwestlichen Tumulussektor Γ fanden sich die beiden weiteren Gräber von Tumulus II, die Gräber 2 und 3. Nahe beim Zentrum des Tumulus kam hier knapp über dem festen sterilen Lehmuntergrund eine horizontale rechteckige Plattform zutage, die aus faustgroßen Flußkieseln gebildet war und ungefähr 2,4m in Nord-Süd- und ca. 2m in West-Ost-Richtung maß (*Abb. 6*).¹¹ In der Mitte der Plattform, in einem West-Ost 2m und Nord-Süd ca. 1,2m messenden Bereich, fehlte die ursprüngliche Kiesellage. Sie war hier durch den Druck der überlagernden Hügel Erde in den darunter liegenden langrechteckigen, ca. 1m tief in den natürlichen Lehmuntergrund eingetieften, Ost-West gerichteten Grabraum gestürzt, der vermutlich eine von Westen zugängliche und von dort aus in den harten Lehmuntergrund getriebene Grabkammer mit Decke aus natürlichem Lehm und kein von oben geöffneter Grabschacht war.¹² Dies läßt sich zum einen aus der Tatsache ableiten, dass an der Westseite der Kieselplattform eine erhöhte randliche Begrenzung festzustellen war, die aus größeren Flußgeschiebesteinen bestand, welche mit ihrer Langseite in Ost-West-Orientierung nebeneinander abgelegt waren (*Abb. 7*). Zum anderen spricht die Tatsache, dass der Grabraum mehr als einen Meter weit über den Westrand der Kieselplattform nach Westen reichte, obwohl in seinem mittleren und östlichen Abschnitt mehr als ausreichender Platz zur Ablage des einen Toten vorhanden war, für die Existenz eines Schachtabchnittes, welcher in Art eines eingetieften Dromos vor einem horizontal sich öffnenden Grabeingang lag. Spuren von Holzbalken, die unter der Kiesellage der Plattform die Abdeckung des Grabschachtes oder der Grabkammer gebildet haben könnten, wurden jedenfalls nirgendwo beobachtet. Oben auf den *in situ* verbliebenen Abschnitten der Kieselplattform wurden keinerlei Funde gemacht. Im Innern dieses Grabes 2 kam unter Kieseln und Erde der eingestürzten Kieselplattform das Skelett einer jungen Frau zutage (*Abb. 8*).¹³ Diese war in Ost-West-Orientierung mit dem Kopf im Osten und Blickrichtung nach Süden hin in seitlicher Hockerlage auf ihrer linken Seite liegend abgelegt worden. Um sie herum lagen mehr als dreißig Tongefäße, darunter viele mit schönem Mal- oder Ritz- und Einstichdekor.

Das Beigabenspektrum des Grabes 2 setzte sich wie folgt zusammen:

1. Mehrere tiefe doppelkonische Schalen mit zwei schulterständigen vertikalen Bandhenkeln und flachem scharf abgesetztem Trichterrand in grauminyscher oder dunkel geglätteter Ware.¹⁴
2. Mehrere doppelkonische Kantharoi mit flachem scharf abgesetztem Trichterrand in grauminyscher oder dunkel geglätteter Ware.¹⁵
3. Zwei große Depata mit Dekor in Mattmalerei¹⁶ und zwei mattbemale Kantharoi.¹⁷
4. Ein Depas Amphikypellon mit Ritz- und Einstichdekor in grauminyscher Ware.¹⁸
5. Ein Depas Amphikypellon in grauminyscher Ware, dessen beide Bestandteile in ihrer Form an so genannte "Trojan Jugs" der reifen Frühhelladisch II-Zeit oder an die spätmittelhelladischen bis frühmykenischen so genannten "Squat Jugs" erinnern.¹⁹

10. Ebenda S. 139 ff., *Abb. 3*.

11. Ebenda S. 140, *Abb. 6*.

12. Ebenda S. 140 ff., *Abb. 7*.

13. Ebenda S. 140 ff., *Abb. 7-9*.

14. Ebenda S. 141 mit Anm. 12-13, Nr. 1, *Abb. 10*.

15. Ebenda S. 143 mit Anm. 14-15, Nr. 2, *Abb. 11*.

16. Ebenda S. 144 mit Anm. 20, Nr. 7, *Abb. 16*.

17. Ebenda S. 144 Nr. 8, *Abb. 17*.

18. Ebenda S. 143 mit Anm. 16, Nr. 3, *Abb. 12*.

19. Ebenda S. 144 mit Anm. 23-24, Nr. 11, *Abb. 20*.



Abb. 8 – Kastroulia Tumulus II. Blick von Westen auf die weibliche Hockerbestattung und Beigaben in Grab 2 (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

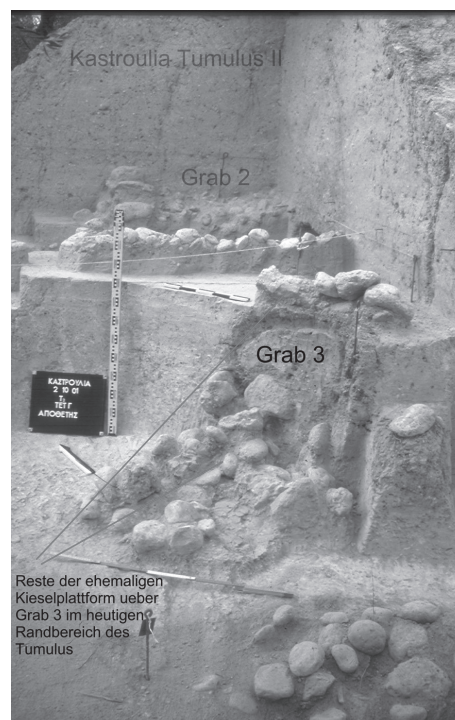


Abb. 9 – Kastroulia Tumulus II. Blick von SSW auf Grab 3 mit den Resten seiner ursprünglichen Kieselplattform. Im Hintergrund Grab 2 (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

6. Zwei kugelige Tassen mit hochgezogenem Henkel in dunkel geglätteter Ware.²⁰
7. Eine tiefe doppelkonische Schale mit scharf abgesetztem flachem Trichterrand und hochgezogenem Vertikalhenkel.²¹
8. Drei Räuchergefäße auf hohem Fuß mit Ritz- und Einstichdekor.²²
9. Ein enghalsiger zweihenkliger Humpen ("Tankard") in grauminyscher Ware mit Ritzverzierung.²³
10. Ein bauchiger Topf mit hohem geschweiftem Trichterrand und zwei schulterständigen Horizontalhenkeln.²⁴
11. Ein großer, im Stil von Gefäßen aus Ägina mattbemalter Askos.²⁵
12. Ein großer Krug in der so genannten "Lustrous Decorated" Ware, d.h. einer minoisierenden Ware.²⁶

Auf der Brust der Toten lagen zudem vier Bronzeanhänger in der Form der minoischen Doppelaxt, wobei an einem sogar noch ein Rest des ursprünglichen, zu einer Schnur gedrehten braunen Leinenfadens erhalten ist.²⁷ Im Bereich um den Kopf der Bestatteten wurden ferner zwei ritzverzierte tönernen Spinnwirtel,²⁸ mehrere Perlen aus Halbedelstein sowie Dutzende von winzigen, wohl aus Bein gefertigten Perlchen aufgefunden, die zu einem Schleier gehört haben könnten.²⁹ Ein weiterer Metallfund war ein Fingerring aus Bronze.

20. Ebenda S. 143 mit Anm. 17-18, Nr. 4, Abb. 13.

21. Ebenda S. 144 mit Anm. 25, Nr. 12, Abb. 21.

22. Ebenda S. 145 mit Anm. 26, Nr. 13, Abb. 22.

23. Ebenda S. 144 mit Anm. 21, Nr. 9, Abb. 18.

24. Ebenda S. 144 mit Anm. 22, Nr. 10, Abb. 19.

25. Ebenda S. 143, Nr. 5, Abb. 14.

26. Ebenda S. 143 mit Anm. 19, Nr. 6, Abb. 15.

27. Ebenda S. 145, Abb. 23.

28. Ebenda S. 145, Abb. 24.

29. Ebenda S. 145.

Grab 3 in Tumulus II fand sich unmittelbar südlich von Grab 2 in Sektor Γ (Abb. 9).³⁰ Seine ehemalige Plattform aus faustgroßen Bachkieseln war ebenfalls eingestürzt. Aufgrund der Pflanzgrube eines Olivenbaumes war dieses Grab, das sich nahe des heutigen Hügelrandes befindet, halb zerstört. Unter den Steinen der eingestürzten Kieselplattform fanden sich Reste eines Skelettes, das zu einem Mann gehörte.³¹ Neben den Skelettresten kamen in Grab 3 folgende Gegenstände zutage:

1. Ein Kantharos vom Typ der so genannten "Nichoria Bowl", ein Leittyp der MH I-Periode des südlichen griechischen Festlandes.³²
2. Zwei große geschlossene Gefäße mit schulterständigen vertikalen Bandhenkeln und Mattmalerei.³³
3. Ein bikonischer enghalsiger Topf mit Doppelperforation unter dem Rand.³⁴
4. Ein großer Krug, der in seiner Form, mit seinen aufgesetzten Horizontalgraten und seinen durch die Gefäßwandung hindurch eingezapften Henkelansatzstellen in minoischer Tradition gefertigt ist und nach P. Warren und M. Cultraro einen tatsächlichen Import aus Kreta darstellen könnte.³⁵
5. Nebeneinander lagen ferner ein Bronzedolch³⁶ und ein Bronzemesser³⁷ sowie eine Handvoll grobkörnigen vielfarbenen Meeressandes.

Im südlichen Tumulus I (Abb. 4a) fand sich nur das Zentralgrab, das durch die Einwirkungen der Raubgräberei zu mehr als der Hälfte zerstört bzw. durchwühlt war.³⁸ Wegen seiner Größe ist zu vermuten, dass hier möglicherweise zwei oder auch mehr Individuen bestattet waren. Im unberührten Nordostende des Grabraumes (Abb. 4b) fanden sich neben spärlichen Skelettresten Gegenstände, wie sie uns aus Grab 2 des Tumulus II bekannt waren:

Ein *Depas amphikypellon* mit Ritz- und Einstichdekor (Abb. 10).

Ein geschlossenes Gefäß (Abb. 11).



Abb. 10 – Kastroulia Tumulus I. Ritz- und einstichverzierter *Depas amphikypellon* vom Nordostende des Zentralgrabes (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).



Abb. 11 – Kastroulia Tumulus I. Geschlossenes Tongefäß vom Nordostende des Zentralgrabes (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

30. Ebenda S. 145, Abb. 25.

31. Ebenda S. 145, Abb. 26. Alle in diesem Aufsatz gemachten Angaben zu anthropologischen Befunden verdanken wir den Professoren M. Michalodimitrakis von der Universität von Kreta und M.Y. Iscan von der Universität von Istanbul.

32. Ebenda S. 145 ff. mit Anm. 27-28, Abb. 29.

33. Ebenda S. 146 mit Anm. 29-30, Abb. 30.

34. Ebenda S. 146 mit Anm. 31, Abb. 31.

35. Ebenda S. 146 mit Anm. 32, Abb. 32.

36. Ebenda S. 145, Abb. 28.

37. Ebenda S. 145, Abb. 27.

38. Zu Tumulus I von Kastroulia vgl. auch Rambach 2010, Abb. 1a-δ.



Abb. 12 – Kastroulia Tumulus I. Ritzverziertes und perforiertes Räuchergefäß auf hohem Fuß vom Nordostende des Zentralgrabes (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

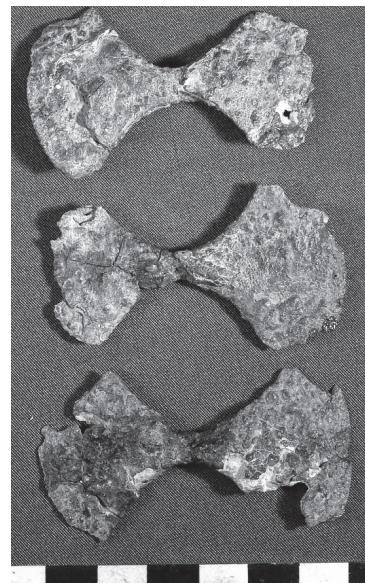


Abb. 13 – Kastroulia Tumulus I. Drei in ihrer Mitte perforierte Bronzeanhänger in der Form der minoischen Doppelaxt. Vom Nordostende des Zentralgrabes (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

Ein Räuchergefäß auf hohem Fuß (Abb. 12).

Drei Bronzeanhänger in der Form der minoischen Doppelaxt (Abb. 13).

Nach Ausweis der zahlreichen Keramikfragmente, die wir im durchwühlten Erdreich des restlichen Grabraumes fanden – darunter u.a. Stücke von mattbemalten Kantharoi, *Depata* und *Askoi* –, dürften die Beigaben dieses Grabes ähnlich zahlreich und mannigfaltig wie die der Frauenbestattung des Grabes 2 in Tumulus II und zudem weitgehend formidentisch mit diesen gewesen sein.

Die drei Einzelbestattungen des nördlichen Tumulus II – einer Frau, eines Mannes und eines Kleinkindes – scheinen zu Mitgliedern einer Familie zu gehören und auch die in Tumulus I Bestatteten mögen in einem verwandtschaftlichen Verhältnis zu dieser gestanden haben. Der Beigabenreichtum des Männergrabes, vor allem aber der des Frauengrabes in Tumulus II übertraf die durchschnittliche qualitative und quantitative Beigabenausstattung eines mittelhelladischen Grabes in außerordentlichem Maße.³⁹ Das Fundspektrum des Frauengrabes mit mehr als 30 Tongefäßen unterschiedlicher Form und Größe, darunter vielen mit Ritz- oder Maldekor, umfaßt ein komplettes Geschirr-Set, welches zur Bewirtung einer größeren Tafelrunde ausgereicht hätte. Die drei Schenkgefäße, eines Fremdgut aus dem Bereich des saronischen Golfes, eines eventuell Import aus Kreta oder minoisierend und eines zur minoisierenden Keramik zählend, stellten dabei Objekte besonderen Prestiges dar.⁴⁰

Im Falle der beiden Tumuli von Kastroulia sind meines Erachtens alle archäologischen und topographischen Kriterien erfüllt, die erforderlich sind, um ein Grabmonument als Bestattungsort einer sozial hervorgehobenen Gruppe von Menschen, einer Elite, anzusprechen. Es fallen dabei nicht nur die, für die Gegebenheiten des frühen Mittelhelladikums, extrem reichen Grabbeigaben ins Gewicht, darunter aus entfernten Landschaften importierte Prestigeobjekte wie die drei Krüge bzw. *Askoi* aus Grab 2 und 3. Von Bedeutung sind auch andere Kriterien:

1. Die beherrschende Position der beiden von weitem sichtbaren Tumuli, oberhalb einer tiefen Schlucht und gegenüber einem Höhenrücken, der bereits in der Periode Frühhelladisch II, wahrscheinlich aber auch im Mittelhelladikum besiedelt war (Abb. 1; 2a-3; 14-15).

39. Cavanagh, Mee 1998, S. 110.

40. Ebenda S. 147 mit Anm. 35. Vgl. auch die Bemerkungen bei Kilian 1997, S. 104 zum MH II-Schachtgrab von Ägina. Zu den Handelsbeziehungen von Messenien in der Bronzezeit vgl. Korres 1993 und Rutter, Zerner 1984.

2. Der Binnenbereich der beiden Tumuli mit seinen hoch aufgeschütteten Erdmassen blieb über Jahrhunderte unberührt von späteren Bestattungen. Wie es scheint, wagte es niemand, nicht einmal die Nachkommen derselben Familiensippe, die Tumuli zu neuen Grablegungen zu benutzen.

3. In der unmittelbaren Umgebung der Tumuli wurden keinerlei Spuren von "einfachen" Gräbern des Mittelhelladikums, wie z.B. Steinkisten- oder Grubengräbern beobachtet, in denen Menschen der örtlichen Gemeinschaft von niedererem sozialem Rang hätten bestattet sein können.

Schließlich ist nicht zu vergessen, dass sich in Tumuli vom Typ Kastroulia mit unterirdischer steingefasster zentraler Grabkammer, die einen horizontal angelegten Zugang besaß, möglicherweise eine der "Keimzellen" der mykenischen Tholosgräber verbirgt, deren frühestes Erscheinen im ausgehenden Mittelhelladikum für Messenien belegt ist⁴¹ und die nachweislich zur Bestattung von Mitgliedern lokaler Eliten dienten.

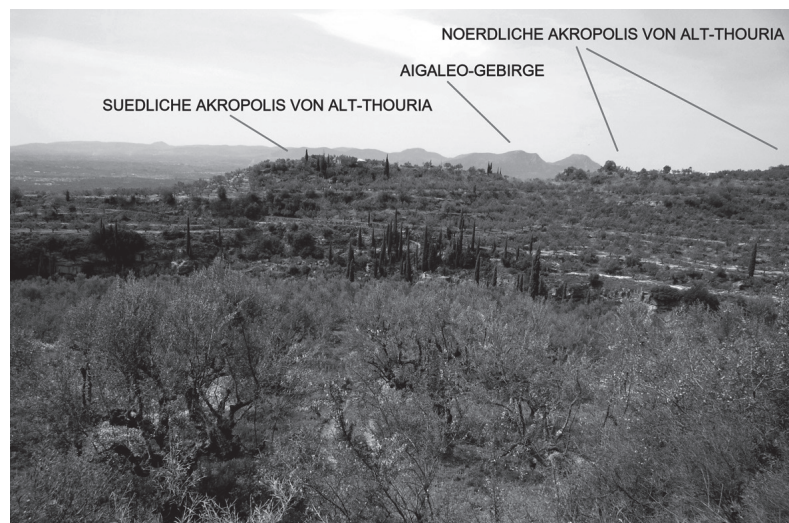


Abb. 14 – Blick von Kastroulia nach Westen über die Xeropotamos-Schlucht hinweg auf die nördliche und südliche Akropolis von Alt-Thouria. Dahinter die messenische Ebene und ganz im Hintergrund das Aigaleo-Gebirge (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

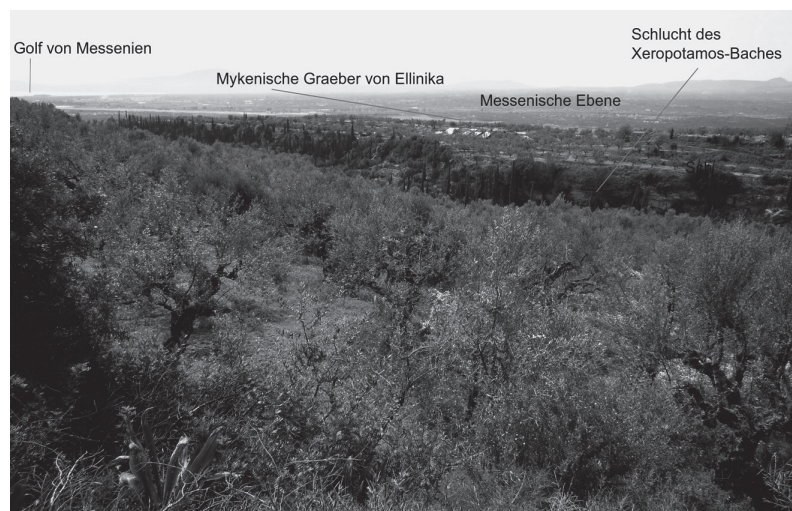


Abb. 15 – Blick von Kastroulia nach Südwesten über die Schlucht des Xeropotamos-Baches hinweg auf die mykenischen Kammergräber von Ellinika, die messenische Ebene und den Golf von Messenien (Aufnahme vom Verfasser).

41. Zur Herleitung der mykenischen Tholosgräber aus mittelhelladischen Tumuli in Messenien vgl. Korres 1993, S. 236-237.

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BURIAL MOUNDS AND “SPECCHIE” IN APULIA DURING THE BRONZE AGE

LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS AND TRANSADRIATIC CONNECTIONS

Giulia RECCHIA *

ABSTRACT

Several funerary rituals coexist side by side during the Bronze Age in Apulia, within a small area moreover. Collective burials in hypogean tombs, that is to say tombs below ground, or natural caves, dolmens under tumuli, pit graves under tumuli and cremation cemeteries are all present. As regards the structural features, there are traits sharing parallels with Transadriatic funerary structures.

Intensive contacts between Apulia and the eastern Adriatic coast are attested from the second half of the 3rd millennium B.C. by several elements, especially by the ceramic patterns of the Cetina culture. Therefore, as regards the early phases of the Bronze Age, the presence in Apulia of small human groups of Transadriatic origin has been suggested.

The variability of the funerary structures and rituals could also reflect the existence of privileged links between some indigeneous groups and Transadriatic communities.

Following this hypothesis, Apulian funerary structures with a tumulus will be examined in detail in a diachronic perspective.

BRONZE AGE TUMULI IN APULIA: EVIDENCE AND QUESTIONS

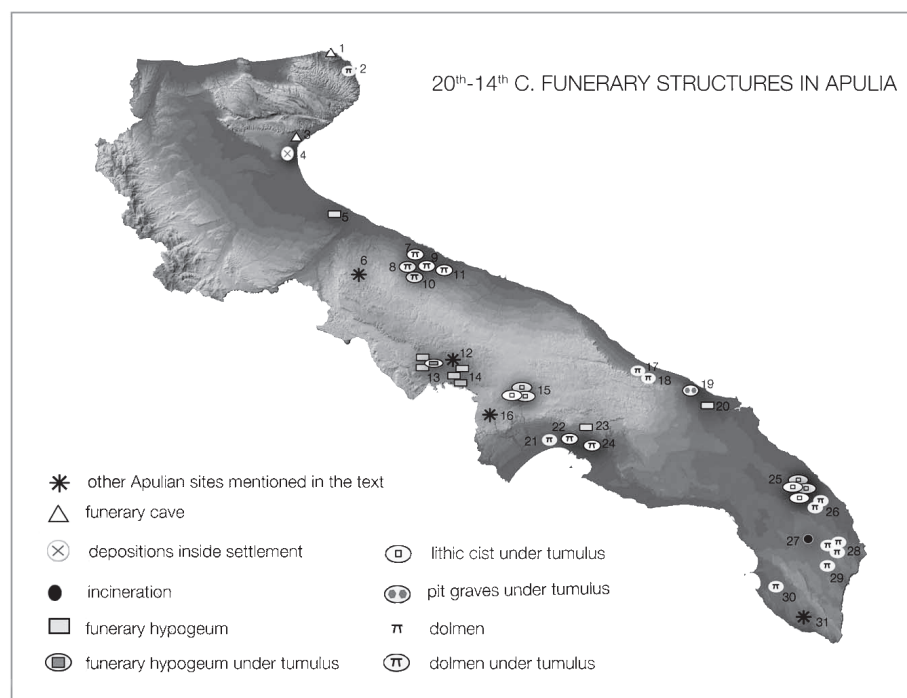
Several epigean, that is, above ground, monumental dry-stone, generally funerary, structures were built in Apulia during the early phases of the Bronze Age. Among them are several different structural features. They coexist with other types of funerary rituals, such as the use of hypogean structures. With a few exceptions, these appear to be opposite of the epigean structures as regards their impact on the landscape (*fig. 1, 1*).

It seems useful to define some broad categories of funerary structures into which specific cases may be classified, even though the data are more complex actually. The categories of epigean structures include:

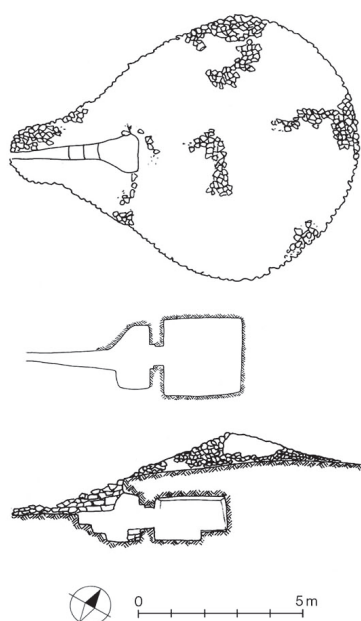
- stone cists under a tumulus (*e.g. fig. 2, 1*);
- gallery dolmens under a tumulus (*e.g. fig. 2, 3-4*);
- small dolmens, for which the presence of a tumulus is not certain (*e.g. fig. 1, 3*);
- several pit-graves under a tumulus (of which we have only one example so far at Torre Santa Sabina, discussed by E. Onnis in this volume).

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- 1 - Grotta Manaccora
- 2 - Molinella
- 3 - Grotta di Occhiopinto
- 4 - Coppa Navigata
- 5 - Trinitapoli
- 6 - Minervino Murge
- 7 - Dolmen la Chianca
- 8 - Dolmen Albarosa
- 9 - Dolmen dei Paladini
- 10 - Dolmen Frisari
- 11 - Dolmen S. Silvestro
- 12 - Altamura
- 13 - Pisciulo
- 14 - Casal Sabini
- 15 - Masseria del Porto
- 16 - Laterza
- 17 - Dolmen di Cisternino
- 18 - Dolmen Santuri
- 19 - S. Sabina
- 20 - S. Vito dei Normanni
- 21 - Dolmen dei Lupi
- 22 - Leucaspide
- 23 - Crispiano
- 24 - Accettulla
- 25 - Vanze - Acquarica
- 26 - Giurdignano
- 27 - Muro Leccese
- 28 - Melendugno
- 29 - Minervino (LE)
- 30 - Recale
- 31 - Salve



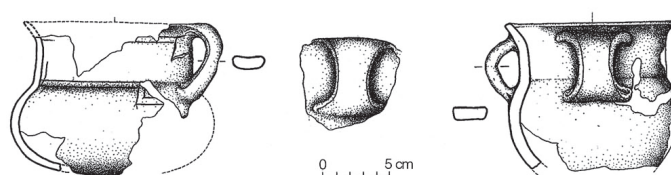
1



2



3



4

Fig. 1 – 1: 20th-14th c. funerary structures in Apulia and other Apulian sites mentioned in text; 2: Pisciulo tomb 3; 3: the dolmens of the Giurdignano area (Otranto); 4: Cetina style pottery from Pisciulo tomb 2 (2, 4 after Cataldo 1998; 3 after Cipolloni Sampò 1987).

The hypogean tombs beneath a tumulus are intermediate between burial mounds and collective inhumations in rock-cut tombs (*fig. 1, 2*). Collective hypogean structures without a tumulus are more frequently attested, and collective inhumations in natural caves also occur. Moreover, there are cremation burials in urns.

For the time being only one case of deposition within a settlement is attested at Coppa Nevigata, near Manfredonia, in the 15th c. B.C. layers (Recchia 2007-2008).

It is difficult to outline an overview of these structures, especially dolmens, in Apulia because of frequent destruction prior to recording,¹ later re-use and the fact that some excavations were carried out many decades ago.

To interpret these funerary monuments, some problems need to be taken into consideration:

Origin

- they could derive from an old local tradition, possibly influenced by contacts with other regions at an earlier period;
- they could originate from cultural contacts with other regions during the Bronze Age;
- they could arise from a local development. If this is the case, similarities should be considered the mere effects of convergence.

Chronology

It is sometimes difficult to identify the building phases of specific monuments because of their sporadic re-use in the following periods.

Social and ideological aspects

These are embodied in the monuments in a number of ways: in their visibility in landscape (as regards dolmens), repeated use in time, internal variability and coexistence with other kinds of funerary practices, like rock-cut tombs inhumations. However, it is difficult to recognize specific rituals linked to dolmens and cists beneath a tumulus, whether these were reserved to any specific social figure and whether they originally were isolated or inserted in a cluster.

THE EVIDENCE OF TUMULI IN APULIA DURING THE 3RD MILLENNIUM B.C.

As regards the previous period, that is the 3rd millennium B.C., collective hypogean tombs (like those of the well-known cemetery at Laterza, cf. Biancofiore 1967; Biancofiore 1971) are very common,² but the use of natural caves is attested too.

New excavations carried out by E. Ingravallo (Ingravallo *et al.* 2007; Ingravallo *et al.* forthcoming) have unearthed tumuli with cremations at Salve (Lecce province). Their whole chronological range is unknown. Radiocarbon dates are lacking for tumulus no. 1: it included pottery (Ingravallo *et al.* 2007, fig. 5) showing close similarities with Taurasi, a 4th millennium site in Campania (Talamo, Recchia 2004; Talamo *et al.* forthcoming).³ This kind of pottery is lacking so far in other Apulian sites: we do not know whether its use continued for a long

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1. For example, we know this happened to several “specchie”, in the Salentine peninsula, and to some dolmens, like Santuri (Brindisi province: Cipolloni Sampò 1987, p. 93) and that seen from S. M. Puglisi not far from Coppa Nevigata (A. Cazzella, pers. comm.).
 2. The use of rock-cut tombs starts earlier, during the Late Neolithic (see for example Arnesano: Lo Porto 1972).
 3. They are cremations located near or under five apsidal or rectangular structures bounded by dry-stone walls.

period of time in this region. Tumulus no. 6 at Salve, which included Laterza type pottery, has a circular plan: it is dated by radiocarbon to 2500-2290 cal. B.C. (Ingravallo *et al.* 2007, p. 23, fig. 6). Tumulus no. 7 has a rectangular plan: its first use dates back to the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C., although we do not know whether the mound was already covering the graves.

Even if the problem of a possible “old” date for tumulus no. 1 is still unresolved, the funerary monuments of Salve are reminiscent of the burial mounds of the Western Balkans from a structural (in spite of specific differing details) and a symbolic point of view. They could support the idea that cultural contacts or movements of small human groups took place between the coasts of the Adriatic in the 3rd millennium B.C.

The possible tumulus of Tursi in the Basilicata region, probably dating back to the first half of the 3rd millennium, could also originate from this kind of relationship (Cazzella in this volume).

In other regions of peninsular Italy, tumuli are rare: the tumulus at Sesto Fiorentino (Toscana) is linked to the Beaker phenomenon but Beaker elements are very few in Apulia and such a cultural tradition seems unlikely to have influenced the appearance of Apulian tumuli. The rare Early Bronze Age tumuli in Campania are later (Palma Campania culture: Albore Livadie 2007, p. 181).

The cultural aspects of the last centuries of the 3rd millennium B.C. in Apulia are still poorly known as regards the funerary structures and most of the settlement patterns. We know that Cetina pottery occurs in several Apulian coastals (Rodi Garganico, Coppa Nevigata: Recchia 2002, Recchia 2010), nearshore sites (Rutigliano: Radina 1989) and inland sites (Altamura, Laterza: Biancofiore 1967; Biancofiore 1971): they are settlements, tombs and sites difficult to interpret (for example Pulo di Altamura). The funerary contexts consist of pre-existing (Laterza) and new rock-cut tombs (Casal Sabini tombs no. 1 and no. 3, Pisciuolo tomb no. 2: Cataldo 1996). These finds probably date back to the second half of the 3rd millennium B.C. (Cazzella 1999; Della Casa 1995) and possibly continue into the early 2nd millennium in some areas (Recchia 2002).

The variety of funerary structures in the early 2nd millennium within such a narrow geographical area could be related to specific mental schemes of various communities, considering their potential value as territorial markers (see, for example, Cazzella 1992). Continuous relationships with the Transadriatic coast, even limited to a few human groups, could have impacted this phenomenon of variability.

THE FUNERARY MONUMENTS OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE 2nd MILLENNIUM B.C.

Certain rock-cut tombs used in the early 2nd millennium were probably built previously or near earlier hypogea: there are two groups of rock-cut tombs in the territory of Altamura (Casalsabini and Pisciuolo: Cataldo 1996; Cataldo 1998). There are three hypogea at Casalsabini, but tomb no. 2 was plundered. As aforementioned, the grave goods in tomb no. 1 included Cetina pottery dating back to late 3rd millennium B.C. A bossed-bone plaque was found too, the type of which is also widespread in the central and eastern Mediterranean during that period (Cataldo 1996, fig. 3). The tomb was also used during the phase characterized by Cavallino/Protoapennine pottery (20th-16th c. B.C.). Only a few data are available about tomb no. 3 but the presence of Cetina pottery leads to the hypothesis that it was built at the same time as hypogea no. 1.

At Pisciuolo three hypogea were found too; they were probably built at different times but were partially contemporary in use, particularly during the 18th-16th c. B.C. (Protoapennine culture). Tomb no. 2 seems to be the earliest one: it has a long corridor, a vestibule and a sub-quadrangular chamber. The presence of Cetina pottery (*fig. 1, 4*) dates its construction at least to the late 3rd millennium (Cataldo 1998, fig. 2). Its use continues in the following centuries (Protoapennine culture), until the Late Bronze Age-Iron Age (Cataldo 1998, fig. 3). About ten inhumations were found in the vestibule and the chamber.

Hypogea no. 3 is characterized by the presence of a tumulus (*fig. 1, 2*), which makes a significant difference with the other rock-cut tombs and constitutes a link with the dolmens. It cannot be ruled out that the tumulus was built some time after the digging out of the tomb. The plan of hypogea no. 3 partially compares with tomb no. 2 (a sub-quadrangular chamber and vestibule, in this case larger) but the access

with three steps is different. The earliest material dates back to the early 2nd millennium B.C. (Cavallino/Protoapennine culture: Cataldo 1998, fig. 4); other elements are typical of the 15th-14th c. but a continuous use is not certain; moreover a re-use in the Late/Final Bronze Age is attested.

The hypogeum no. 1 is structurally different (it has a pit used as access and a sub-elliptical chamber); published pottery seems to start in the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C. (Protoapennine culture: Cataldo 1998, fig. 1).

In the Apulia region (to use the term given by the modern administrative system) until now we do not know other hypogea under a tumulus but we can mention rock-cut tombs under a burial mound at Murgia Timone (Matera), not so far from Pisciuolo (Cipolloni Sampò 1987, p. 66-68). The association of a hypogeum tomb with a burial mound might not be as occasional as it looks like, at least in the High Murge-Matera plateau area.

Other rock-cut tombs (without a tumulus) are known in Apulia, starting from the early 2nd millennium B.C., like, for example, at S. Vito dei Normanni and Crispiano (Lo Porto 1964; Quagliati 1920).

As regards the epigeal structures, particularly dolmens, we do not know with any certainty when they first appear: some evidence, in particular the small dolmens in the Salentine peninsula, suggests that they began during the first phases of the Bronze Age, early in the 2nd millennium B.C. We do not know, however, whether they originally had a tumulus which has not been preserved. These structures are low and covered by a slab resting on stone piles or vertical slabs: it is the "block and boulder" technique in Whitehouse's terminology (Whitehouse 1967). They are located in the costal area of the Salentine peninsula (Giurdignano, Muro Leccese, Melendugno, Minervino) (fig. 1, 3), often concentrated in small zones a few hundreds of metres apart. Most of them were plundered and lack an archaeological deposit, but remains of grave goods dating back to the early phases of the Bronze Age were preserved in some cases (Cipolloni Sampò 1987, p. 75-76). Many years ago J. Evans (1956) suggested similarity with the dolmens of the Tarxien Cemetery Maltese culture, now dated to 2300-1500 B.C. In M. Cipolloni's opinion the comparison is strengthened by the presence (Maggiulli 1912) of a cremation burial near a destroyed dolmen at Muro Leccese, a funerary practice also used in the Tarxien Cemetery culture; moreover three small vases from this burial look like the vase of the cremation burial no. 1 at Contrada Diana, on the Lipari Islands (Cipolloni Sampò 1987).

Again in the Salentine peninsula, the "*specchie*" have to be mentioned: they are piles of stones, in a few cases dating back to the Bronze Age. The "*piccole specchie*" stone piles near Vanze (fig. 1, 1.25) are of great interest; eleven of them were explored in the first half of the 20th c. A.D. (Bernardini 1942; Drago 1954-1955). They are tumuli (diameter 15-25m) covering a stone cist, often in clusters: human bones and some pottery were found but not well published. In five cases pottery shows features also found in settlements dating back to the early 2nd millennium B.C.

Some dolmens are attested near Taranto too, on the costal plain, not far apart (fig. 1, 1. 21-24). The data are insufficient. The dolmen at Leucaspide had a tumulus (ca. 15m in diameter) and an access corridor bordered by a line of stones, like in the case of the "*piccole specchie*" (Cipolloni Sampò 1987, p. 93). Protoapennine pottery was found inside it. Also the dolmens of Accettulla and Taviano were considered more similar to those of the Salentine peninsula than those of the Bari province (Cipolloni Sampò 1987, p. 93-94; Whitehouse 1967, p. 361): this could depend on a chronological, rather than geographical, factor since the dolmens in the Bari province are probably somewhat later.

The funerary structures unearthed by R. Striccoli in the territory of Masseria del Porto, near Gioia del Colle (Alta Murgia), are of great interest too (fig. 1, 1.15; fig. 2, 1-2). They consist of five clusters of tumuli (Murgia San Francesco, Murgia Giovinazzi, Murgia San Benedetto, Masseria della Madonna, Masseria San Benedetto),⁴ a few kilometres apart from each other, with different phases of building and use. The tumuli have a circular plan, with a perimeter wall and a central lithic chamber, sometimes with a corridor (Striccoli 1989). There are good drawings of the structures but the archaeological material is not so well published and chronology is problematic. The identified pottery allows to date some of the structures to the first centuries of the 2nd millennium B.C. (Protoapennine culture): Murgia San Francesco tomb no. 3, Murgia Giovinazzi

4. No potsherd from Masseria della Madonna is characteristic enough to be surely attributed to the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C.

tombs nos. 1 and 2, Murgia San Benedetto tomb no. 2, Masseria San Benedetto tomb no. 1 (Striccoli 1989, fig. 8, 15, 21, 23, 37, 38, 41, 51, 52, 98, 99). The presence of some flint arrowheads in the cist of tumulus no. 2 at Murgia Giovinazzi is reminiscent of Copper Age rather than Bronze Age. The abovementioned earliest tombs were re-used during the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age; in the last period new tumuli were built near the previous ones. Even if there are some differences, the tumuli of Masseria del Porto are similar to the Transadriatic Cetina ones (Marović 1959; Marović 1976; Marović 1991).

A. Jatta (1914) reported some tumuli with stone cists near Canosa (Ofanto valley). Chronological data are lacking and a later date (Final Bronze Age-Iron Age) cannot be ruled out. Recent excavations in the same area brought to light a non-funerary tumulus near Minervino Murge, which is difficult to interpret (Radina *et al.* 2008; Radina in this volume).

FUNERARY MONUMENTS BETWEEN THE 16TH AND 14TH C. B.C.

Important social and economic transformations took place in Apulia between the 16th and the 14th c. B.C., in relation to the development of transmarine trade with the Mycenaean world. These transformations are reflected in settlements and funerary rituals: even if rock-cut tombs and dolmens under a tumulus remain in use, changes are recognizable in both types.

The building and use of large dolmens in the Bari province seem to date back to this period.⁵ Their structure is more complex than in previous ones: they are gallery dolmens, often built on a platform bounded by a line of vertical stones, under a tumulus. The dolmen at San Silvestro near Giovinazzo, for example, is very sophisticated: it has a circular vestibule ending the long corridor chamber and covered by the tumulus (fig. 2, 4) (Lo Porto 1967). They are located near the shore (but not visible from the sea). Four dolmens between Corato and Bisceglie (La Chianca, Albarosa, dei Paladini, Frisari: Cataldo 1995, pl. XXXVI) are along a stream, about 2 km apart (fig. 1, 1.7-10; fig. 2, 3): it is not a cluster but neither are they isolated.

Some features, especially as regards the grave goods, are reminiscent of the contemporary collective depositions in rock-cut tombs (Peroni *et al.* 2003; Tunzi Sisto 1999) or caves (for example the Grotticella Funeraria at Manaccora: Recchia 1993), the absence of weapons in the dolmens making the chief difference: it is not excluded that the well visible dolmens were all deprived of their most valuable artefacts by robbers. Elements of Transadriatic influence, such as the circular metal plaques with *repoussé* decoration or ceramics of Dinara style (Cataldo 1995, pl. XXXVII), are attested both in hypogean and epigean contexts.

Other dolmens, probably dating back to the same period, were recorded further south, again near the shore, such as those at Montalbano and Santuri (now missing), but we have no data on their inhumations and grave goods (Cipolloni Sampò 1987, p. 93-94). A plundered dolmen was excavated at Molinella too (Gargano promontory: Puglisi 1948; Nava 1982).

The presence of inhumations at the coastal settlement of Coppa Nevigata, near Manfredonia (fig 1, 1.4), is a separate case. There are certain similarities with the contemporary dolmens regarding the type of artefacts and the absence of weapons. During the 15th c. B.C. some parts of the earlier dry-stone fortification wall built about 1700 B.C. were re-used as funerary structures. In particular, two adults were each buried in a postern; residual human bones were found on the walls, which had been partially destroyed, between the posterns (see Recchia 2007-2008 for a detailed analysis). Metal plaques were found with *repoussé* decoration of Transadriatic influence, as it occurs in the Bisceglie dolmen (Cazzella, Moscoloni 1995).

In the 2008 campaign of excavation a new postern was partially unearthed: in this case the covering consisting of large slabs was preserved. I do not rule out the possibility that the posterns with burials originally looked like that. A symbolic and structural link with the dolmens is to be suggested since the dry-stone walls form a sort of tumulus and the postern a sort of stone cist, but the hypothesis needs more evidence.

5. Recently F. Radina promoted the publication and excavation of some of them (Radina 1995).

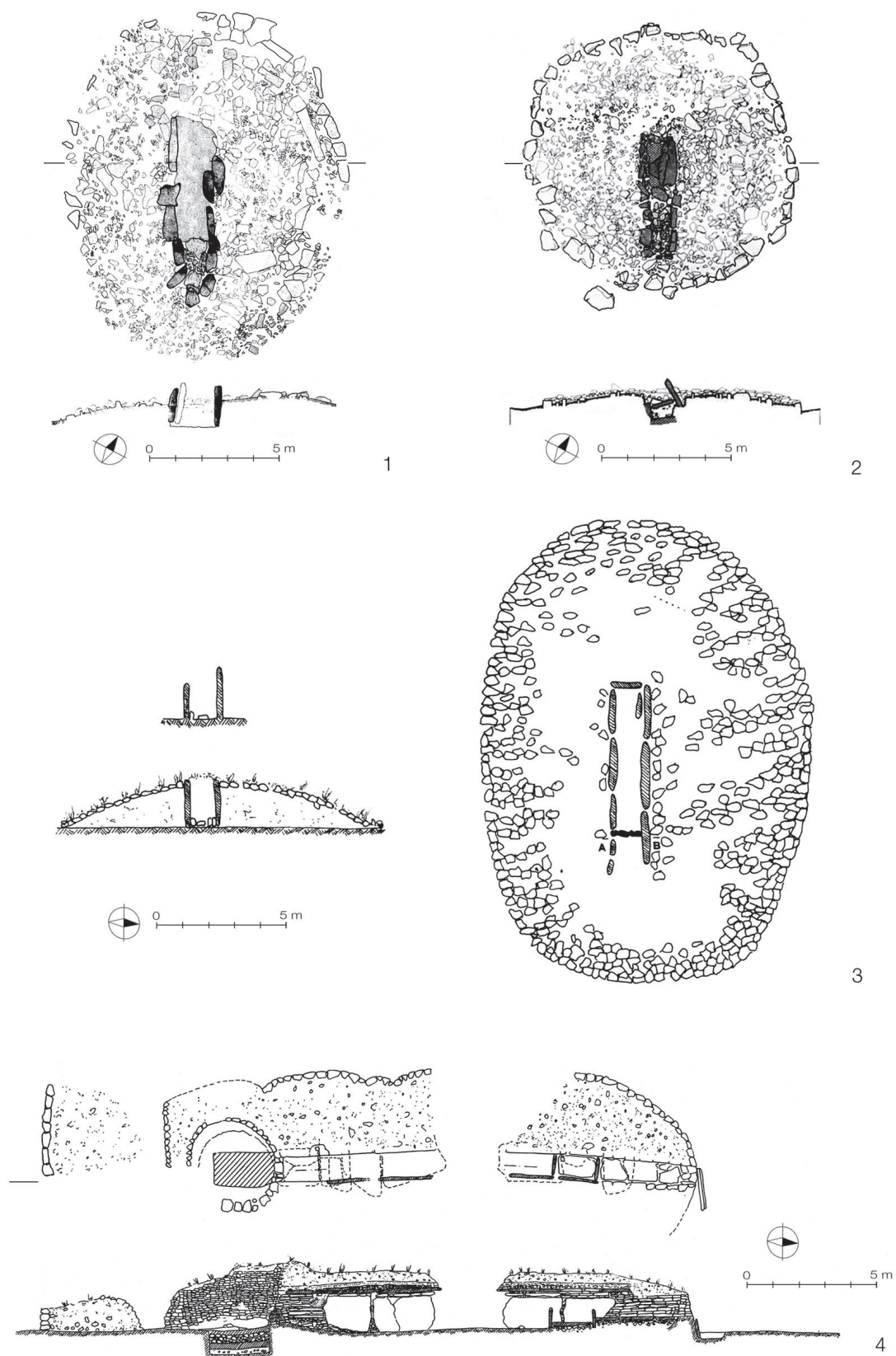


Fig. 2 – 1: Murgia S. Benedetto tomb 1; 2: Murgia Giovinazzi tomb 1; 3: dolmen of Albarosa; 4: dolmen S. Silvestro (Giovinazzo). (1, 2 after Striccoli 1989; 3 after Cipolloni Sampò 1987, 4 after Lo Porto 1965).

Burials linked to fortifications are well-known in the same period in the Istrian Castellieri (for example Monkodonja and Sedegliano: Mihovilić *et al.* 2005; Teržan, Hänsel in this volume; Càssola, Corazza 2009); this phenomenon, together with stylistic similarities in the pottery, attests a strong relationship between those regions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The hypothesis that the presence in Apulia of Cetina pottery and Aegean elements such as the bossed-bone plaques is associated with the movements of small human groups was proposed some years ago (for example, Cazzella 1999). In my opinion another possible illustration of such interaction is the building of burial mounds in Apulia in the late 3rd millennium B.C., for instance as occurs at Salve (and perhaps some centuries earlier at Tursi: Primas 1996, p. 124; Cazzella in this volume).

These cultural contacts possibly imply that groups of immigrants on one hand adopted local funerary rituals (as attested by the presence of Cetina pottery in the rock-cut tombs of Laterza and Pisciuolo) and, on the other hand, built funerary structures (burial mounds) continuing their tradition but using pottery of a local style. The differences between the monuments of southern Italy and those of the Transadriatic area could have to do with modifications of the local funerary patterns. Tomb no. 3 of Pisciuolo could reflect such a “fusion” process: it leads to the hypothesis that there was a symbolic continuity with rock-cut tomb no. 2 which contained Cetina pottery. The burial mound of tomb no. 3 could derive both from a perpetuation of the Transadriatic funerary patterns and a social marking off of the buried group.

In conclusion, the appearance of burial mounds in the early centuries of the 2nd millennium B.C. (the “*specchie*” of the Salentine peninsula and tumuli of Masseria del Porto) could represent the Transadriatic tradition and, at the same time, attest to new contacts between the eastern and northern Adriatic coast and communities integrated in the local cultural context of south eastern Italy.

Continuous relationships during the Bronze Age between northern Apulia on one hand and the Transadriatic coast and Karst on the other are well attested by similarities concerning not only the ceramics and metal artefacts but also the fortified settlements. The trade of metal (and perhaps amber?) deriving from the eastern Adriatic coast could have been the basis of these relationships, and the continuous use of burial mounds a part of this enduring cultural contact and exchange, even though the monuments were transformed according to the changing social and political situation.

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UN IMPIANTO DELL'ETÀ DEL BRONZO NELL'ALTA MURGIA PUGLIESE

IL RECINTO E IL TUMULO DEL SITO DI LE CHIANCHE (MINERVINO MURGE, BARI)

A BRONZE AGE CONSTRUCTION IN THE APULIAN ALTA MURGIA: THE ENCLOSURE AND THE MOUND OF THE SITE LE CHIANCHE (MINERVINO MURGE, BARI)

Francesca RADINA*

RIASSUNTO

In un paesaggio caratterizzato da una serie concatenata di alture tra i 400 e i 600 metri, al confine tra l'Alta Murgia pugliese e le Alture lucane, la Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Puglia ha identificato nel corso di attività di archeologia preventiva nel 2006 il sito di Le Chianche a monte di una profonda e allungata incisione carsica. Su un'estensione presunta di un ettaro e mezzo circa è stata esplorata un'area di mq 650, dove è emersa una struttura in pietra con un rudimentale doppio paramento che recitava un ampio spazio quadrangolare scoperto di ca. 22 x 16 m. A questo si accedeva attraverso dei varchi, mentre all'esterno erano dislocate le tracce di piani argillosi con tracce d'uso (ceramica, litica e fauna). Decentrata all'interno, in direzione ovest si delineava una compatta struttura a tumulo, del diametro di circa m 6, costruita, successivamente alla frequentazione dello spazio interno, con pietrame di medie e grandi dimensioni disposto di piatto in rudimentali cerchi concentrici, in cui si inserivano blocchi di maggiori dimensioni, posti verticalmente. Sulla base dei primi risultati – le indagini sono state sospese per assenza di finanziamenti – sembra evidente che il tumulo sia stato costruito successivamente all'uso dello spazio interno, a giudicare dalla omogeneità della ceramica confrontabile per alcuni aspetti con le *facies* antiche del Protoappenninico. In assenza di elementi per il momento che riconducano ad un uso funerario, lo studio puntuale delle classi di reperti in relazione all'uso dello spazio potrà forse avvalorare l'ipotesi di una destinazione non prettamente funzionale per l'impianto descritto.

ABSTRACT

In a landscape characterized by a chain of hills rising to between 400 and 600m in altitude, within the Alta Murgia and the Lucanian mountains, the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici of Apulia identified in 2006, during a preventative archaeological operation, the site of Le Chianche, uphill from a long, deep karstic incision. Within a presumed expanse of about a hectare and a half, an area of 650 sq. m was explored, in which a stone structure with a rudimentary double facing was revealed, which enclosed a large, quadrangular open space of about 22 x 16m. Passages gave access, while on the exterior lay scattered remains of clay surfaces carrying evidence of use (pottery, lithics and faunal vestiges). On the inside, off-centre towards the west, a compact structure in the form of a mound, about 6m in diameter, was built after the period when the internal space was used, with large and medium-sized stones laid flat in rudimentary concentric circles, in which larger blocks were set vertically. Based on the preliminary results – the research

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was suspended due to lack of funding – it appears evident that the mound was built after the use period of the interior space, to judge by the homogeneity of the pottery, comparable in certain aspects to the early *facies* of the Proto-Appenninian. In the absence of elements related to funerary use, a study of the types of objects related to the use of the space may be able to give weight to the hypothesis that this construction had a role other than a purely functional one.

Le attività di tutela per il settore preistorico della Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Puglia nel comparto nord-occidentale dell'Alta Murgia gravitante tra i territori di Minervino Murge e Spinazzola hanno fatto recentemente fronte a progetti infrastrutturali di forte impatto sul territorio, come la realizzazione della strada regionale n.6 ed i settori in fase di realizzazione del Parco eolico di Minervino Murge. I dati emersi di conseguenza ad una serie di indagini di archeologia preventiva consentono di ricostruire a grandi linee per un'area poco indagata, compresa tra la valle ofantina a NO, le valli lucane a ovest e l'altipiano murgiano a SE, i caratteri dell'insediamento protostorico nel corso del II millennio a.C., confrontabili con il quadro già più definito per altre aree del sud-est italiano, in particolar modo per i territori costieri ionico e adriatico.¹

Il suggestivo paesaggio dell'Alta Murgia, una considerevole parte del quale è oggi protetta dalla costituzione del Parco Nazionale, presenta morfologia collinare, con alture che raggiungono anche 670 m di quota (Monte Caccia), alternate a depressioni, scarpate e solchi torrentizi con diffusi fenomeni carsici superficiali come le doline e gli inghiottitoi. In alcune aree l'attività di cava di pietra e la bonifica dei suoli per fini agricoli, con l'intervento di mezzi meccanici, hanno avuto effetto devastante e di modifica spesso radicale dei luoghi. Nelle zone invece integre la copertura vegetale è molto rada, con le caratteristiche dell'ambiente della substeppa, con bassi arbusti e localizzazioni puntiformi di boschi di querce. Il paesaggio è ancor oggi segnato dalle antiche vie della transumanza, marginali dalle architetture in pietra di muri a secco, masserie, ovili e fontanili.

Parte integrante dell'odierno paesaggio è inoltre tutta una serie di localizzati accumuli di pietrame, di diversa entità, spesso derivanti dall'opera moderna di raccolta per fini agricoli, ma altrimenti riferibili ad antiche strutture a tumulo di epoca e tipologia diversificata, tra età del Bronzo e primo ellenismo, segnalate da una bassa vegetazione di copertura. Posti in posizione emergente, isolati o a gruppi, spesso in stretta concomitanza con vaste aree insediative recintate da basse strutture murarie, probabilmente comprendendo anche zone per diversi ettari da adibire all'allevamento, non passarono inosservati già ai primi del secolo scorso ad Antonio Jatta,² quando certamente la diffusione e lo stato di conservazione dovevano essere ben più significativi. Le ricerche estensive nell'area di S. Magno,³ in territorio di Corato, a sud di Minervino Murge, negli scorsi anni Settanta a cura di Rodolfo Striccoli dell'Università di Bari, fornivano un'evidenza di scavo più circoscritta, prettamente di tipo funerario, rilevando un raggruppamento consistente di oltre un centinaio di strutture a base circolare con cista litica centrale per l'inumazione con relativo corredo funerario, il cui uso appare collocabile prevalentemente in età arcaica. Mentre sulle Murge sudorientali, in territorio di Gioia del Colle, in località Masseria del Porto le ricerche mettevano in evidenza, con tipologie differenti e riutilizzazione in contesti culturali diversi, una serie di analoghi monumenti ma in questo caso già risalenti al Protoappenninico.⁴

Anche il settore nord-occidentale dell'Alta Murgia non appare estraneo alla diffusione delle strutture a tumulo in una fase precoce, in un ambito cronologico compreso tra 4000 e 3500 anni fa: in particolare si citano per la contiguità temporale con il sito di Le Chianche, oggetto di questo contributo, quelle piuttosto imponenti (altezza intorno ai tre metri) conservatesi nell'area dell'insediamento dell'età del Bronzo di Carluva, a pianta subcircolare, non ancora esplorate, o nei siti di altura di Monte Savignano e Monte Pietroso.⁵

1. Cinquepalmi, Radina 1998.

2. Jatta 1914, tav. 1.

3. Striccoli 1989.

4. Nel corso della prima metà del II millennio a.C. si colloca nel sud-est italiano la diffusione dei "dolmen", monumenti con tumulo di pietrame a copertura della galleria di lastroni ortostati in pietra, con una tipologia ben rappresentata lungo il versante adriatico della Bassa Murgia barese e ancora leggibile nel gruppo dei dolmen di Giovinazzo, Bisceglie e Corato (Lo Porto 1967; Radina 1995).

5. Radina *et al.* 2008, p. 166-168; Pofi, Radina 2010.

Il sito di Le Chianche occupava un terrazzo pianeggiante, a m 350 sul livello del mare, oggi a ridosso dell'odierno abitato di Minervino, per un'estensione stimata di un ettaro e mezzo circa, in un contesto ambientale caratterizzato sullo sfondo, ad ovest, dalla presenza del Vulture e segnato da un'ampia incisione carsica che scorre a qualche centinaio di metri a NO, con diverse diramazioni costellate da grotte e ripari antropizzati in antico.

Gli scavi sono stati per il momento limitati ad un'unica campagna, tra 2006 e 2007, in coincidenza del previsto attraversamento della strada regionale n.6 e pertanto la ricerca è in uno stadio del tutto iniziale, così come le osservazioni conseguenti, ma il contesto si prospetta assai interessante per la sua singolarità. L'area archeologica, in superficie, era originariamente caratterizzata da suoli bruni con un'elevata dispersione di ceramiche in impasto e rado pietrame, certamente pertinente a strutture insediative, alcune delle quali, dai dati di superficie, furono inizialmente attribuite alla *facies* di Laterza, per la presenza di alcune forme assimilabili, come frammenti di pareti a superfici embricate. Le piste di preparazione delle citate opere stradali purtroppo però compromettevano parte del giacimento, probabilmente proprio a danno di questa porzione dell'abitato.

L'area esplorata evidenziava invece nel saggio B, per più di due terzi, il perimetro di un imponente recinto in pietra (US8),⁶ che foderava i fianchi di un'ampia depressione artificiale ricavata nel banco di terre rosse, a pianta quadrangolare, di m 22 x 16 circa, ad angoli arrotondati, con il lato orientale curvilineo.

Il recinto (*fig. 1*) era costituito da un doppio paramento piuttosto incoerente di pietrame di media e piccola grandezza, di spessore variabile tra 1,50 e 2,20 m e altezza massima di 1 m, adattato nel suo andamento all'affioramento di roccia sottostante, ora piatta e orizzontale, ora più inclinata verso occidente, e inglobando di questa anche le sporgenze naturali. In alcuni casi era riscontrabile l'utilizzo di frammenti di macine di pietra lavica del Vulture nel riempimento tra i due rudimentali paramenti. Alcuni blocchi del recinto dovevano essere stati evidentemente anche cavati *in loco*, in qualche caso disposti a contrasto per l'alloggiamento di pali lignei, come registrato nell'angolo NO.

Allo spazio interno si doveva poter accedere attraverso un varco, coincidente sul lato ovest con una diversa strutturazione del pietrame per la presenza di blocchi allungati, e all'esterno, sui lati ovest ed est, erano dislocati piani con battuti argillosi parzialmente combusti e acciottolati con tracce d'uso (ceramica, litica e fauna domestica – ovicaprini e maiale). Quasi assenti tra il pietrame del recinto frammenti di intonaco argilloso, piuttosto limitata anche la presenza di reperti ceramici riferibili ai tipi di seguito descritti. L'assenza di intonaco conferma la mancanza di parti in elevato per uno spazio aperto dove il recinto poteva fungere, oltre che come struttura di contenimento, dato il dislivello tra interno ed esterno di oltre un metro, anche da fondazione di una palizzata a ulteriore protezione e/o delimitazione dello spazio.

Lo spazio interno, indagato per una superficie di 400 mq a ridosso del recinto, era colmato superiormente da livelli (US19, 16, 23 e 23 bis) corrispondenti alla fase ormai di abbandono del contesto. Al di sotto di questi, nel settore di scavo subito a ridosso del recinto, a ovest, dove il deposito raggiungeva un metro circa di profondità, si delineava un piano d'uso (US27), datato al 3437 ± 50 B.P. (1890-1620 cal. B.C. [LTL 2853A]), con più abbondante presenza di reperti come ceramica in frammenti con caratteri protoappenninici e alcuni strumenti in pietra levigata.

Un approfondimento di scavo in una porzione molto limitata, in corrispondenza della fondazione del tumulo di seguito descritto, evidenziava inoltre come il deposito raggiungesse la profondità sul banco di terre rosse di 1,70 m dal piano di campagna, con i livelli bruno-rossastri (US32 e 34), quest'ultimo con larghe macchie di concotto e ceramica *in situ*, probabilmente il più antico nell'ambito della complessa struttura recintata, con ceramiche in frammenti di buona pezzatura e grumi di argilla (concotto). L'US32 è da mettersi in relazione, anche per quote, tenendo però presente la pendenza con una forte immersione verso ovest, con l'US27, posta ad ovest, all'interno del recinto, entrambe infatti individuerebbero il piano di calpestio relativo alle fasi di frequentazione del tumulo.

Decentrata in direzione ovest e in corrispondenza del varco occidentale si delineava, parzialmente ricoperta dai livelli superiori di colmata dello spazio interno del recinto, una compatta struttura a tumulo, del diametro di circa 6 m e altezza di 0,90 m, costruita con pietrame di medie e grandi dimensioni nella porzione superiore, e più minuto verso il fondo. Il pietrame era disposto di piatto, in modo piuttosto fitto e irregolare,

6. L'abbreviazione US che ricorre nel testo sta per "unità stratigrafica".

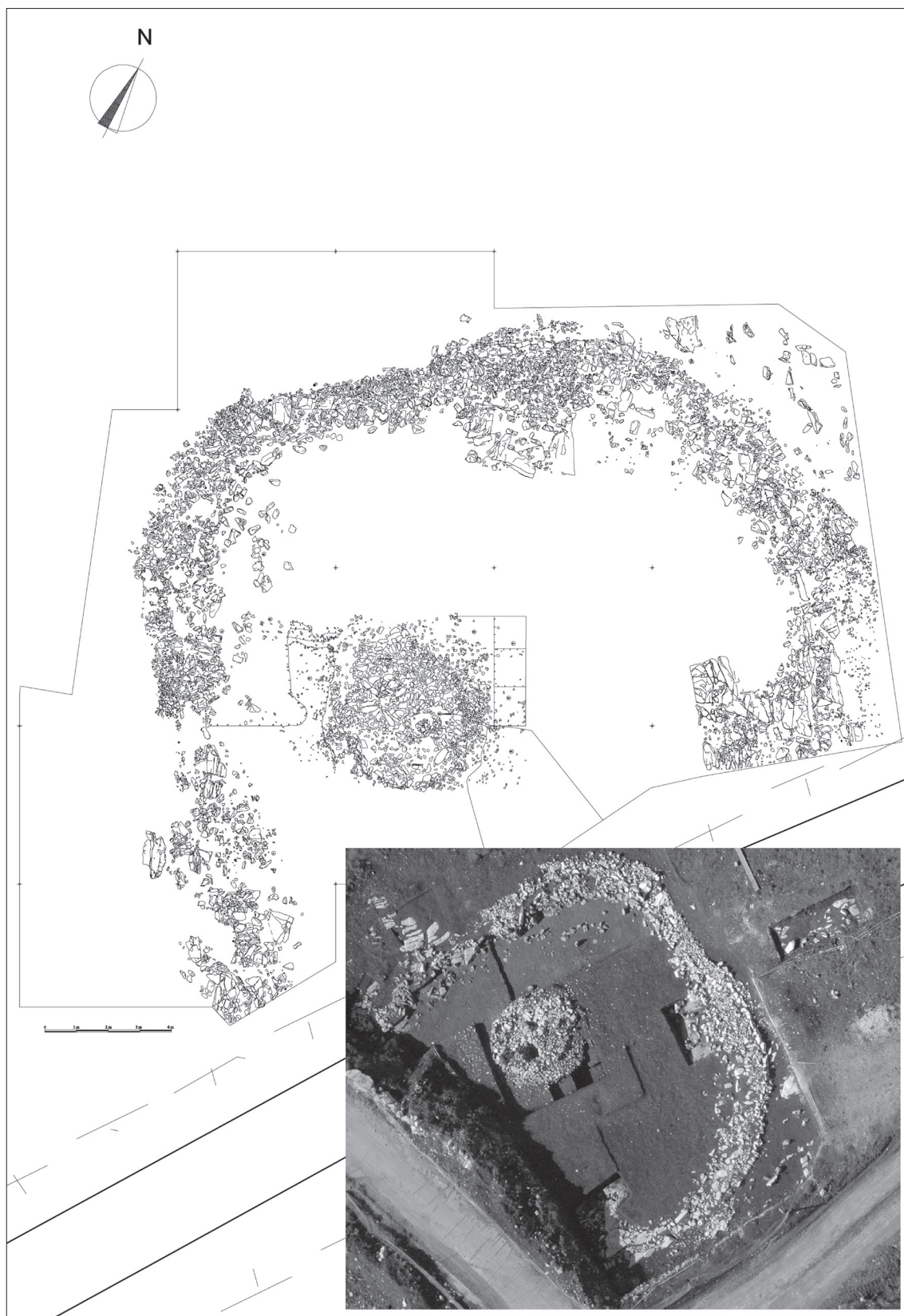


Fig. 1 – Planimetria e foto dall'alto del recinto e del tumulo di Le Chianche a fine campagna di scavi (2006-2007).

ma in qualche caso si riconoscevano rudimentali allineamenti concentrici, in cui si inserivano anche blocchi di maggiori dimensioni. Tra il pietrame della struttura, solo parzialmente indagata con l'asportazione del pietrame superiore più incoerente nel tentativo di individuare eventuali elementi strutturali indicativi della funzione o destinazione del tumulo, limitatamente documentati sono apparsi anche i resti di attività e di reperti principalmente costituiti, questi ultimi, da frammenti di impasto di piccole dimensioni, schegge di selce e scarsi resti di fauna. Del tutto assenti invece, allo stato delle ricerche, risultavano le tracce di resti o attività relativi a deposizioni umane se pur secondarie.

Nel settore NO del tumulo, quasi alla sommità, l'asportazione di un primo livello più incoerente di pietrame metteva in evidenza da un lato una serie di blocchi allungati e più regolari nella forma, disposti a stretta raggiera, in modo da formare un incavo di 1,50 m di diametro, una sorta di base per l'alloggiamento di qualche elemento in verticale. D'altra parte lungo il perimetro esterno, sul lato sud, si evidenziavano invece chiaramente alcuni grandi blocchi posti verticalmente a guisa di segnacolo. Un ulteriore approfondimento al margine del settore nord-orientale del tumulo intercettava, oltre ai livelli sottostanti relativi alla frequentazione della spazio precedentemente alla sua erezione (US34), la base del tumulo impostata in una fossa di fondazione piuttosto evidente (US33).

Successivamente le due strutture, spazio recintato e tumulo, furono contemporaneamente in uso in un arco di tempo cui fanno riferimento da un lato la datazione al 3300 ± 50 B.P. (cal. 1690-1450 B.C. [LTL 2834A]) per la "fondazione" del tumulo (US26), dall'altro quella al 3437 ± 50 (cal. 1890-1620 B.C. [LTL 2835A]) per la US27, che individua un piano di utilizzo dello spazio recintato quando il tumulo era ancora ben in vista.

LA DOCUMENTAZIONE ARCHEOLOGICA

L'ascia martello

Nel piccolo saggio nel livello di riempimento (US26) della fossa di fondazione alla base del tumulo, si rinveniva a circa 30 cm dal banco roccioso, insieme a pochi frammenti di parete di ceramica protoappenninica e di fauna, un esemplare integro di ascia martello in pietra dura (*fig. 2*), un calcare carbonioso a grana finissima, ricco in quarzo e feldspati, la cui deposizione potrebbe essere messa in relazione con l'erezione del tumulo. L'ascia si caratterizza infatti come esemplare di particolare pregio sia per la materia prima che per la levigatura accurata che ne evidenzia la lucentezza. Presenta testa e tallone non distinti e corpo a sezione quadrangolare (cm 9 di lunghezza totale, cm 4,9 di larghezza massima, cm 3,7 di spessore), con margini levigati a spigolo su una delle due facce, entrambe piane; il foro cilindrico per l'immanicatura è in posizione centrale (cm 2 di diametro).

Esso rientra in una tipologia di strumenti di forma più semplice, cosiddetta a ferro da stiro, rispetto all'ascia forata a testa distinta attestata nei contesti eneolitici dell'Italia centro-settentrionale e soprattutto funerari, con valenza simbolica quale oggetto di prestigio.⁷ Nel nostro caso, nonostante la pregiata qualità del manufatto, l'utilizzo è evidente, stando alle tracce d'uso sul tagliente, con la conseguente asportazione di larghe e profonde schegge, e più limitate ma presenti sul tallone, piatto, con leggere picchiettature. Diffuse piccole scheggiature caratterizzano anche il perimetro esterno del foro, su una faccia dello strumento, molto probabilmente riferibili alla frizione dell'immanicatura contro il bordo dell'ascia durante l'uso. Essa, inoltre, sembra essere stata oggetto di riutilizzo, forse come affilatoio, data la presenza, sulla faccia opposta, di un taglio longitudinale tra tagliente e tallone, ottenuto con una levigatura assai meno rifinita e interrotta dalla presenza di scheggiature dovute forse anche alla battitura durante l'uso (*fig. 2: b*).

7. Carrisi 2003, p. 355-400, in particolare per una disamina, partendo dai rinvenimenti nel fossato eneolitico di Conelle, sulla distribuzione dell'ascia martello nell'età dei Metalli peninsulare.

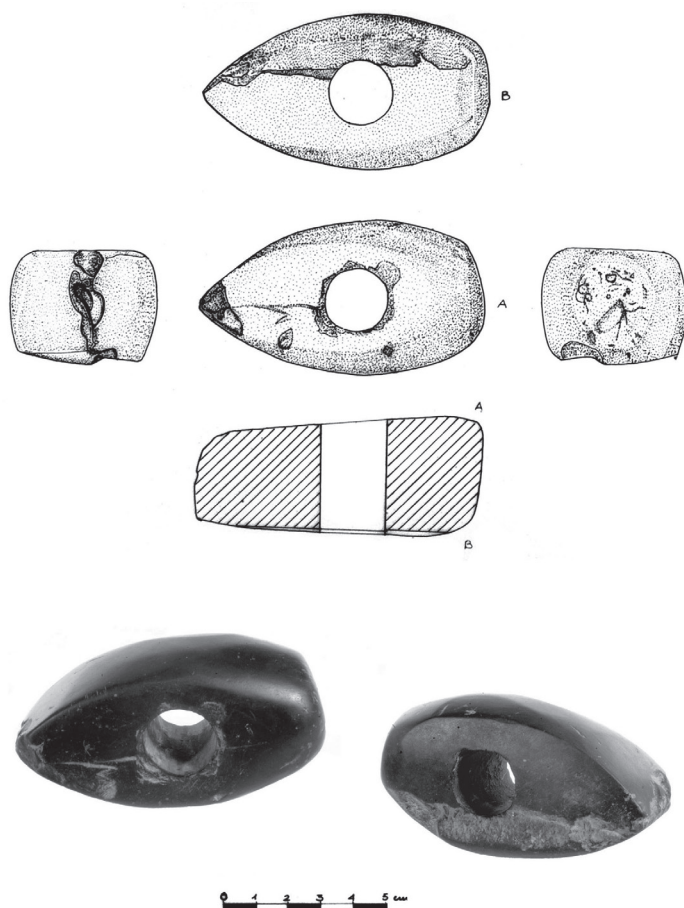


Fig. 2 – L'ascia martello (inv. Ba29913) rinvenuta nel livello archeologico alla base del tumulo (US26).

È evidente, quindi, la specializzazione dello strumento, che rientra in quella tipologia per cui viene solitamente proposta una destinazione connessa con attività di carpenteria, ma che si caratterizza, nell'ambito della strumentazione in pietra levigata generalmente nota nei siti pugliesi eneolitici e dell'età del Bronzo, come elemento differenziato. È infatti relativamente più comune l'utilizzo di asce piatte, a profilo trapezoidale e sezione biconvessa e di minori dimensioni su materiali diversi, e su calcare nello stesso sito di Le Chianche, con una produzione piuttosto specializzata attestata anche negli altri siti coevi dell'areale murgiano.⁸ A Le Chianche in particolare quasi assente è l'industria scheggiata in selce.⁹

Elemento di pregio è rappresentato per l'ascia martello anche dalla selezione della materia prima, costituita da rocce sedimentarie affioranti lungo l'Appennino Lucano,¹⁰ ambito non estraneo geograficamente al nostro contesto, che porterebbe a non escludere del tutto l'ipotesi di un artigianato specializzato *in loco*. La deposizione dell'ascia nel livello di fondazione del tumulo, con i limiti

naturalmente imposti nella ricostruzione più organica della destinazione del complesso dalla parzialità di ricerche ancora in corso, rimanda ai contesti di segno culturale e funerario dell'Italia centro-settentrionale, trasferendo sul monumento la sua connotazione simbolica.

8. Ad esempio nei siti di Masseria Caterina e Carluva, in territorio di Minervino Murge (Radina *et al.* 2008). La distribuzione di strumenti riportabili al tipo rappresentato è alquanto limitata nella regione, oltre che per una probabile minore ricorrenza, anche per l'edizione spesso parziale o poco accurata della strumentazione in pietra, attestata comunque da esemplari frammentati. Si può a titolo di esempio fare riferimento ad alcuni frammenti di ascia forata noti in contesti di superficie dell'età del Bronzo, come nel caso di quello in calcare proveniente dall'area del dolmen di Molinella sul Gargano, attribuito al Bronzo Recente (Nava 1981, fig. LII,2), al frammento di testa tronconica egualmente in calcare dal sito protoappenninico de L'Annunziata, nella Bassa Murgia barese (Martinelli 1999, fig. 72, 2), e ancora ai due frammenti, probabilmente dello stesso strumento, dal sito costiero adriatico protoappenninico di S. Pietro, a Bari (Radina 1988, fig. 107).

9. Tracce dell'abitato di Le Chianche sono affiorate inoltre circa 200 m a nord, nel saggio A, di 6 x 6 m che intercettava un livello con un piano residuale antico, caratterizzato da una concentrazione di argilla cotta di 2 x 2 m, con frammenti di vasi in impasto, attrezzi in pietra levigata come macine in trachite e accettine in quarzite, e resti di fauna domestica riferibili a ovicapriini. Una lesina in rame era inoltre deposta sul piano di frequentazione. Nelle sue immediate vicinanze si recuperavano resti umani combusti (un molare e frammenti craniali) e frustoli di carboni che potrebbero far pensare a sepolture destrutturate dai lavori agricoli nelle vicinanze se non ai resti di una deposizione secondaria. Lo smontaggio dell'accumulo di argilla cotta comportava anche il rinvenimento di un palo ricavato da legno carbonizzato di quercia, facente parte della struttura combusta, che ha fornito la datazione radiocarbonica al 3311 ± 55 B.P. (cal. 1740-1490 B.C.), quindi riferibile ad un arco di tempo sovrapponibile con l'uso dello spazio recintato.

10. Determinazione di Rocco Laviano dell'Università di Bari.

La ceramica

La ceramica, in corso di analisi più dettagliata, presenta nel complesso caratteri omogenei e riferibili ad aspetti antichi del Protoappenninico che non differiscono, se non per la diversa distribuzione quantitativa, nell'ambito delle fasi di frequentazione sin qui delineate nel sito:

- costruzione del recinto e uso dello spazio interno;
- costruzione del tumulo e uso dello spazio interno al recinto e circostante il tumulo;
- abbandono del contesto.

Prevalgono le forme in impasto grossolano con grandi e medi contenitori a corpo ovoidale, con superfici irregolari ed elementi decorativi piuttosto ripetitivi, come cordoni lisci o con decorazione a tacche, orli dentellati, muniti di prese quadrangolari e di anse a nastro verticale, anche a gomito. Unico motivo decorativo differente è rappresentato, su un frammento di orlo, da una fila di triangoli incisi campiti a tratteggio.

In ceramica più fine a superfici scure, ben lisciate, sono attestate ciotole carenate di medie e soprattutto piccole dimensioni, con carena alta e accentuata, mentre sono presenti, anche se in minima quantità nel complesso degli elementi per la presa, alcune estremità di manici nastriformi con appendice asciforme o ad espansione trapezoidale con foro triangolare. Sono documentati inoltre alcuni fondi conici di piccole ciotole.

L'impianto analizzato presenta al momento non pochi problemi interpretativi, certamente condizionati anche dalla parzialità delle ricerche per un'area che si presenta piuttosto ampia in sé, oltretutto inserita nel contesto più generale dell'insediamento del quale non abbiamo che qualche indizio. Non possiamo quindi per il momento valutare l'eventuale rapporto spaziale e funzionale con il resto dell'abitato.

L'insieme di dati disponibili, però, sembra porti a escludere utilizzi di tipo prettamente funzionale alle attività primarie e all'economia dell'abitato o più specificatamente legati a usi abitativi in senso stretto. Il recinto, impiantato ancor prima dell'erezione del tumulo, doveva avere, quindi, già di per sé una sua funzionalità rispetto allo spazio delimitato interno. Questo si configura come un'area infossata, in parte naturalmente depressa ma in parte ricavata artificialmente, con un dislivello massimo di 1,50 m circa tra esterno e interno, delimitata sul fondo dall'affioramento delle piatte lastre del banco calcareo, ricoperte a luoghi da suoli rossi, con una leggera immersione verso il centro. Tale andamento doveva determinare la confluenza, e se mai la raccolta se pur temporanea, vista la permeabilità della roccia, di acqua che circolava per ragioni diverse in superficie.

Potrebbe essere stata forse determinante l'osservazione di questo fenomeno, anche nell'ipotesi di una destinazione connessa con manifestazioni di segno culturale, per un'architettura dettata quindi dalle esigenze del rituale. Per confronto, nel panorama di quanto finora noto nei contesti peninsulari, per queste fasi, la documentazione riferibile a possibili elementi e/o aspetti culturali, spesso in stretta relazione con il rituale funerario, si presenta diversificata nell'adozione di modelli profondamente diversi, essendo attestati l'utilizzo della grotta naturale,¹¹ la costruzione di ambienti ipogeici¹² e di tumuli e tombe in pietra, anche monumentali (dolmen). Nel nostro caso l'erezione del tumulo in posizione di rilievo nello spazio recintato, come si è voluto sottolineare, già in una seconda fase di uso dello stesso, rappresenta indubbiamente un intervento simbolico importante, tanto più rafforzato dalla deposizione di uno strumento particolare come l'ascia martello, consolidando o modificando in parte significato e destinazione dell'impianto nel suo complesso.

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THE TORRE S. SABINA TUMULUS (BRINDISI, ITALY) IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSMARINE RELATIONS DURING THE 14TH CENTURY B.C.

Elisabetta ONNIS *

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present article is to examine the Torre S. Sabina tumulus (an unicum in the funerary context of southern Italy) in regard to its transadriatic connections during the 2nd half of the 2nd millennium B.C.

First of all, this analysis will be concerned with the burial structure and the study of grave artefacts, highlighting the role of the eastern Apulian coast.

Therefore, I will examine several tumuli of the Albanian area and investigate the possible connections and common elements shared with this Apulian mound, since the mortuary custom of burying several individual inhumations together beneath a tumulus of soil and stone is peculiar to the transmarine area.

This analysis will focus on the combination of grave and artefacts in tomb no. 12 of the Torre S. Sabina tumulus, which revealed not only Mycenaean type pottery but also one bronze Aegean-type knife (unconfirmed at this moment in the funerary contexts of south eastern Italy), thereby underlining the similarities and differences in the funerary evidence currently available for the transadriatic coastal region.

Finally, the Torre S. Sabina tumulus will be put in a wider context and compared with other areas such as the Ionian Islands.

The Torre S. Sabina funerary tumulus in the district of Brindisi was uncovered in 1957, during agricultural work. There is nothing comparable among the Middle Bronze Age graves of south eastern Italy in terms of its structure but also of its grave goods, which have been accurately studied before by other authors (Lo Porto 1963; Vagnetti 1991, p. 370-371; Vagnetti 1998, p. 274). This paper, starting from a re-analysis of the context, aims both to set the Torre S. Sabina tumulus within a transadriatic framework and to underline similarities and differences between the two opposing shorelines (*fig. 1*).

Located on a calcarenitic rock terrace a few hundred metres from the coastline (Contrada Morelli, Carovigno), this burial mound was properly excavated throughout 1958 by F.G. Lo Porto, who tried to reconstruct the tumulus structure, the graves and the inventory of each grave using workmen's observations, because part of the mound had been damaged during earlier agricultural works and the tombs had also been rummaged.

The tumulus, according to F.G. Lo Porto's reconstruction, had a diameter of 16m and a height of 1.5m. It was built out of stones and soil, with a stele on the top (*fig. 2*).

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Fig. 1 – Map of the sites mentioned in the text.

The digs brought to light 25 graves excavated in the rock and covered by a slab of local limestone; the walls of the majority of these pits were curved and slightly bent at the top. Pits held only one burial, as far as can be discerned from the few skeletal remains found in the infiltration soil. Only two graves presented more than one burial. Grave 19 contained two bodies. Grave 5, to judge from the huge amount of bones discovered, could have been either a collective grave or an ossuary. There is not enough evidence to choose between the two interpretations: the dimensions of the pit are the same as all the other graves and no grave goods were found. Four small graves, attributed to children, were also uncovered in the central part of the mound (Graves 10, 11, 13, 25). It is important to stress the presence of a sort of step along one of the shorter sides, which could be an head-rest (Graves 8, 12). There was no outer grave delimitation.

Because of the condition of the site, human remains were found only in six instances: inhumed individuals lay curled up on their right side, facing either west (graves 14, 19) or southeast (grave 12). In some instances (Graves 6, 18, 19) the bodies were laid on a thin sandy bed 5 to 8cm thick. We have no information about the other tombs.

Concerning the tumulus chronology, at first Lo Porto (1963; 1993) attributed the mound to the Subapennine phase (Late Bronze Age), then later R. Peroni (1985, p. 219; 1989, p. 348) and D. Coppola most recently of all (1998) supposed a use of this cemetery during various phases, from the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age, considering grave 12, where very important grave goods were found, to be the first inhumation (fig. 2).

L. Vagnetti (1998, p. 274) has performed the latest analysis of the Mycenaean pottery of this grave (1 cup, 1 matt-painted jug and 1 *alabastron*) and she judges them to be LH IIIA. In a more recent reconsideration of the mound R. Peroni (2004, p. 177) also set the tumulus in various phases of the Middle Bronze Age. Moreover, G. Recchia (Recchia, Ruggini 2009) has recently compared the three bowls from

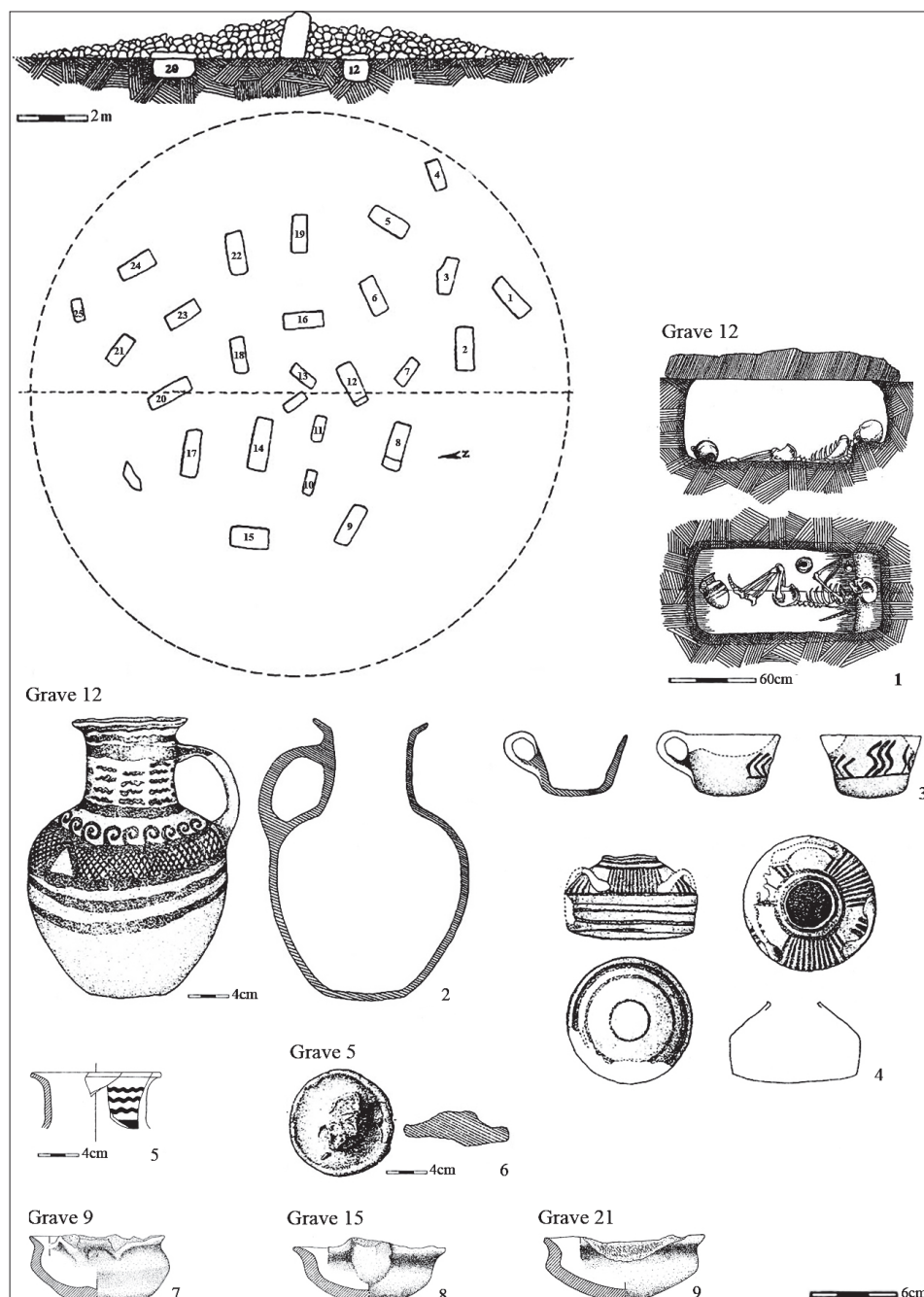


Fig. 2 – 1-4, 6-9. The Torre Santa Sabina tumulus (after Coppola 1998, fig. 402-403; Cinquepalmi 1998); 5. Roca Vecchia (after Guglielmino 1996, fig. 7, 2).

graves 9, 15 and 21 with some specimens from Punta Le Terrare and Chiancudda, dating back to between the 15th and the 14th c. B.C., but also from Roca Vecchia, where they were found together with Mycenaean pottery of LH IIIA (Pagliara 2005, pl. CLXIb). At this site a jug fragment akin to the Torre S. Sabina matt-painted jug was uncovered among the remains of the Middle Bronze Age levels (Gugliemino 1996, p. 263, fig. 7, 2), but it has been dated uncertainly to LH II (fig. 2). These elements persuaded scholars to date the tumulus to an advanced phase of the Middle Bronze Age.

The mound is a common feature in the funerary context of south eastern Italy, like the dolmen in the area around Bari or the “*specchie*” of Salento. Furthermore, the custom of gathering a group of graves in the same chamber is very widespread in the Apulian territory during the Middle Bronze Age.

But the deposition of several inhumed individuals under a mound is completely unprecedented. For these reasons R. Peroni (1989, p. 348) saw in it an interesting affinity with the opposite shore, especially Albania, so much so that he supposed them to have been a foreign presence in the Apulian region. The scholar outlined other similarities with this area in both the positioning of the dead, who lay curled up on their right side, and the presence of the knife among grave goods. He compared the Apulian burial mound with the tumuli of Vodhinë, Bodrishtë and Patos. Lo Porto (1993, p. 12) agreed and in addition he found similarities with Vajzë, Cepunë, Kakavi, Barç and Dukat.

The connections outlined above seem very convincing. In the area of Albania the tumulus burial custom was very common during the Bronze Age. The cemeteries consisted of one or more tumuli of varying dimensions and were used for a long period, until the Iron Age. The majority of the bodies lay curled up but some supine positions were also found.

But alongside these affinities, it is possible to point out some very interesting differences too, by means of a more detailed analysis of the Albanian sites.

In better documented funerary contexts of southern Albania, we can see a desire to highlight the older burials, the “foundation” burials. They were covered with a cairn, especially in the Early and Middle Bronze Age, like at Vodhinë (Prendi 1956), Piskovë (Bodinaku 1981), Dukat (Bodinaku 2001-2002), Vajzë (Prendi 1957; Hammond 1967, p. 83) and Barç (Andrea 1985), or they were put all together in the central part of the tumulus, for example at Patos (Korkuti 1981) and Prodan (Aliu 1984). Subsequent burials were situated over this inner mound with another covering of stones and soil. In some instances mounds were bounded by a ring of stones, like at Pazhok (Hammond 1967), Vodhinë, Piskovë and Barç. Therefore, burial mounds increased in diameter and height during each phase.

Moreover, there is no sufficiently complete documentation of the number of graves in every Albanian context during the first phase of the Late Bronze Age, which corresponds approximately to the LH IIIA and is the period to which the Santa Sabina tumulus is dated. Lack of a detailed chronological subdivision of the Late Bronze Age, corresponding to the LH III, leads to generic dating of the majority of the contexts.

There are 25 Torre Santa Sabina graves, and grave 12 was considered the earliest within the tumulus, according to the fact that it holds a central position and has the richest grave goods. Grave goods were not present in the other tombs, except for graves 9, 15 and 21,¹ where they were composed only of local pottery. But examining the plan, we can see that the position of grave 12 is not absolutely central, in fact it is located more southward. There are no elements marking a grave group or underlining each possible construction phase. These aspects could give credit to the hypothesis suggesting that this funerary context was homogeneous and took place during just one phase.

There are also other aspects to take into consideration. Inside the Apulian mound four probably child graves were found; three of them are located in the central area. Presently, the documentation about the Albanian Bronze Age tumulus contexts does not reveal the presence of this kind of grave. Ossuaries (or collective graves like no. 5) are not attested in Albania, where, instead, single or double interments are used. Also, the erection of a stele on the tumulus top does not seem to be a widely diffused custom in this area.

As for the tomb structure, Torre Santa Sabina graves are pits which make use of lithic slabs as covers. We might think of them like cist tombs: stone slabs lining the pit walls were not necessary because the pits were excavated directly in the rock.

1. The attribution of a little lid of depurated clay to grave 5 is uncertain. Lo Porto (1993, p. 9) associated it with the jug of grave 12.

Site	Dagger	Pottery of Minyan Type	Tweezers	Spearhead	Sword	Knife	Mycenaean pottery opened shape	Mycenaean pottery closed shape	Golden ornament	Amber bead	Glass bead	Chronology	Bibliography
Bardhoc (T. II) g. 1						2						MH advanced	Hoti 1982, pl. IX.
Dukat (T. II) g. 30		3				1							Bodinaku 2001-2002, pl. IV.
Vajzë (T. A) g. 12		1	1	2	1	1							Prendi 1957, p. 85-88.
Vodhinë (T. I) g. 16	1	4											Prendi 1956, p. 185-186.
Vodhinë (T. I) g. 15		3											Prendi 1956, p. 185.
Bardhoc (T. I) g. 22						1						LH I-II	Hoti 1982, pl. VIII.
Pazhok (T. I) g. 7					1	1	1 cup		2				Bodinaku 1995, p. 259.
Rehovë (T. I) g. 285								1 jug					Bejko 1993, fig. 2b.
Margëllic								1 <i>alabastron</i>				LHIII A	Ceka 1990, fig. 4.
Shtikë (T. I) g. 4						1							Aliu 1996, pl. I.
Këlcyrë g. 1				1	1							LHIII B	Bodinaku 1988, fig. 2
Barç (T. II) g. 6							1 <i>kylix</i>					LHIII C late	Andrea 1985, pl. XVII.
Barç (T. I) g. 65				1			1 cup						Andrea 1985, pl. IX.
Barç (T. I) g. 162				1	1								Andrea 1985, pl. XV.
Barç (T. I) g. 120						1							Andrea 1985, pl. XII.
Barç (T. II) g. 11						1		1 <i>amphoriskos</i>					Andrea 1985, pl. XVIII.
Barç (T. I) g. 18								1 <i>amphoriskos</i>					Andrea 1985, pl. III.
Barç (T. I) g. 47								1 stirrup-jar	2	1	4		Andrea 1985, pl. VI.
Piskovë (T. I) g. 103			1					1 jug					Bejko 1993, fig. 6a.
Piskovë (T. I) g. 88								1 jug					Bejko 1993, fig. 6b.
Barç (T. I) g. 55								1 jug					Andrea 1985, pl. VII.
Bajkaj (T. I) g. 14								1 <i>lekythos</i>					Budina 1971, pl. IV.
Barç (T. I) g. 149								fig.					Andrea 1985, pl. XIV.

Fig. 3 – Synopsis of grave goods in Albanian burial mounds.

In south western Albania cist graves were usually cut into the Bronze Age tumulus. Some of the cist tombs of Bajkaj (Budina 1971), Vodhinë or Vajzë date back to the Middle Bronze Age but at the same time the custom of simple pits with a covering or lined stone pits was also spread widely, like at Pazhok, Dukat and Piskovë. The majority of the other cist tombs, those with enough documentation, seems to belong to the advanced Late Bronze Age, for example at Kelcyre (Bodinaku 1988), Piskovë, Bajkaj, Vodhinë, Vajzë, Bodrishtë or Kakavi (Prendi 1959), and are, therefore, later than Santa Sabina.

Moreover, one of the short walls in graves 12 and 8 had a sort of head-rest, and there is a possible match in Albanian graves, where, sometimes, the deceased's head was sustained or surrounded by two stones, like at Shtikë or Rehovë (Aliu 1996, p. 58) in south eastern Albania, where the bodies were in a supine position.

In the case of the grave inventory, we can also highlight similarities and differences with the closest part of the opposite shore.

Examining the synopsis table (fig. 3), knives are very widespread as part of the Albanian Bronze Age grave good assemblage. During the earlier phases they are associated with other weapons, for example swords (Vajzë t. 12; Pazhok t. 7),² but usually they are found in isolation (Onnis 2008, p. 249-253).

The knives found in Albania are of Aegean type: they have a straight back, a lightly curved cutting edge and rivets on the base (fig. 4). In the earliest models (MH advanced), which are also present during the beginning of the LH, the rivets assume a triangular position, like the knives of Vajzë (grave 12), Dukat (grave 30), Midhë, some of them with considerable dimensions (about 20cm). They belong to Branigan's type V (1974, p. 28) and they were widespread in Epirus, the Ionian Islands (Lefkas, Ithaka) but also Aetolo-Akarnania, Boeotia and Messenia (Soueref 1989, p. 67). In other instances the rivets have a vertical position on the base, like the examples of Vajzë, Maliq and the Mat valley; they belong to Branigan's type Va and they have been found especially in central and northern Albania.³ Knives with rivets in a right angle position (type Vb) were found too, but until now, only in the Mat valley, with just one match at Sesklo (Branigan 1974, p. 167).

2. At Vajzë the association of sword+knife+spearhead refers to the contemporary funerary custom of the area of Crete and of continental Greece (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, fig. 27, 30).

3. Probably a knife of this kind was found at Lefkas (Hammond 1974, p. 141).

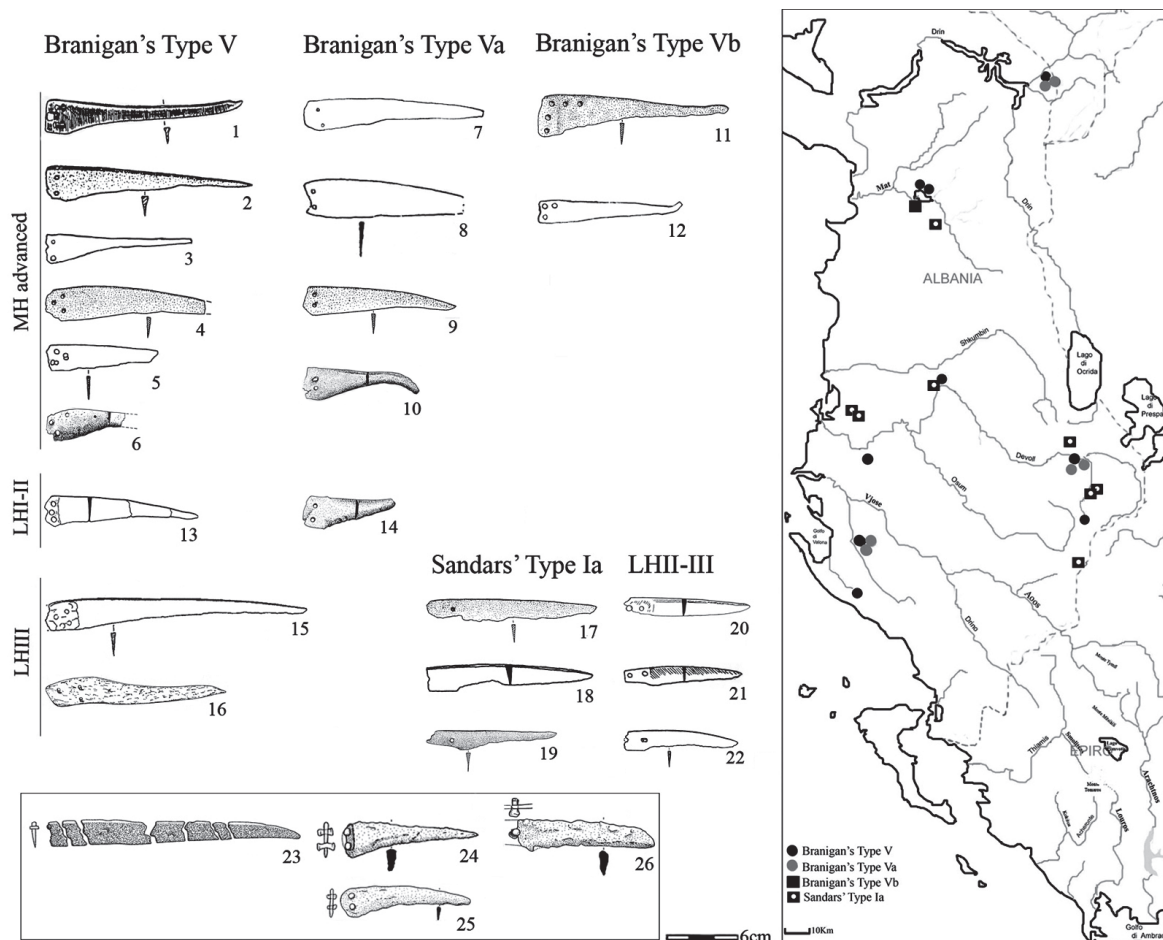


Fig. 4 – Aegean and Aegean type goods in the Albanian graves; a: Knives of Aegean type found in Albania; 1. Dukat; 2, 8. Vajzë; 3, 9. Maliq; 4, 13. Midhë; 5. Pazhok; 6, 10, 14. Bardhok; 7, 12. Mat valley; 11. Rrethe Bazje; 15. Shtikë; 16. Patos; 17, 21. Barç; 18. Gërmenej; 19. Sovjan; 20. Burrel; 22. Prodan; 23. Torre S. Sabina; 24-26. Trinitapoli (1 after Bodinaku 2001-2002, pl. IV, 4; 2, 4, 9, 11, 17, 19 after Prendi 2002, fig. 2, 7 and 4, 6-10; 3, 7, 12 after Hammond 1974, fig. 4, f, g, j; 5, 8 after Bejko 1994, fig. 5, 8-9; 6, 10, 14 after Hoti 1982, pl. VIII, IX; 13, 20 after Kurti 1977-1978, pl. II, 3-4; 15 after Aliu 1996, pl. I, 1; 16 after Korkuti 1981, pl. VIII, no. 71; 18 after Andrea 1981, pl. I, 2; 21 after Andrea 1985, pl. XII, no. 120; 22 after Aliu 1984, pl. I, 11; 23 after Bianco Peroni 1976, pl. 8, no. 74; 24-26 after Tunzi Sisto 1999, pl. V, 211, 37, 95).

In Northern Apulia, in the funeral context of Trinitapoli (Foggia), partially contemporary to the Torre Santa Sabina tumulus, other knives akin to the Albanian specimens of the Aegean type were found (Tunzi Sisto 1999, pl. V). In particular they show an interesting affinity with the northern models (type Va, fig. 4).

On the LH Albanian knives rivets are most often aligned in a horizontal position on the base; the majority of them belongs to Sandars' type Ia (1955, p. 175-176) and they were widespread in the Devoll Valley (like at Barç, Sovjan, Gërmenej).

The Torre Santa Sabina knife could be of Aegean type and it was ascribed to Sandars' type Ia (Harding 1975, p. 196). A vertical position of the rivets seems most likely, according to the rivet on the upper side of the fragmentary base. This rivet arrangement is not frequent on Albanian knives of this kind. Moreover, considerable dimensions (21.5cm) are another element of difference from this type. So, it is not easy to attribute this knife to a specific type. Among the variety of functions theorized for Bronze Age knives, its dimensions lead to the assumption that the Torre Santa Sabina artefact was a weapon. It was, however, not in association with other arms as occurs in the Albanian funerary contexts.

Concerning the Mycenaean pottery of grave 12, three vessels were found (fig. 2): one cup, which shares an affinity with the Vaphiò type (FS 227, FM 67/58), one straight-side *alabastron* (FS 94, FM 64/21),

both with connections to the Achaian production (Cinquelpalmi 1998, p. 153; Lo Porto 1993, p. 9-10; Vagnetti 1991, p. 370) and one matt-painted jug, to which a little lid was ascribed, probably from grave 5.

A grave inventory of three vessels is uncommon in southeast Italian funeral contexts. A scanty presence of Mycenaean pottery in these graves has been already outlined (Radina, Recchia 2006). There are also many differences compared to the Albanian grave inventories: in some of the Albanian tombs these kinds of artefacts were found but in a smaller quantity.

Examining the table (fig. 3), it is possible to notice, according to the present documentation, that from the LH I-II until the advanced LH IIIC period there was only one, probably imported, Mycenaean vessel in the Albanian graves.⁴ This element could be connected not only with the rarity of these foreign goods but also with a specific local funerary custom.

In fact, during the advanced LH IIIC period, at Barç, in spite of a widespread presence of Mycenaean pottery at this site, in the grave inventories, only one pot of this kind is recorded. Most of them were closed shape vessels.⁵ This feature could be related to a specific significance allotted to the contents (oil/balsam or other precious substances), in addition to the importance of the pottery as an imported good. But it does not seem to relate to the adoption of the Mycenaean funerary custom of putting this kind of artefact among grave goods. In fact, in the Mycenaean ritual several vases were put in the same grave (Alberti 2004, p. 134).

Unfortunately, concerning the LH IIIA period, there is no close comparison between the Mycenaean pottery of Albanian funeral mounds and Torre Santa Sabina. Just one *alabastron* of LH IIIA was found at Margëllic (Ceka 1990, p. 140-141) but it was in an isolated tomb.

As has been pointed out, there are many affinities with the Albanian region but after a more detailed analysis, these similarities do not seem so close. The differences lead to the necessity of setting the Torre Santa Sabina tumulus in a wider framework.

During the Middle Bronze Age, in fact, both Adriatic shores were in contact with the Aegean but in different ways. In the earlier phases (MH advanced) the contacts between the Mycenaean world and the Albanian region were more direct (Vajzë t.12) and intense. A change happened during LH IIIA,⁶ according to the unearthed materials which generally were not from the Aegean but, instead, of Aegean type (swords).⁷ This phenomenon could be connected with more intense Mycenaean relations with other areas, like Adriatic Apulia. Here the Mycenaean pottery is very widespread in several coastal settlements, while amber and other *exotica* reoccur more frequently in grave contexts (Radina, Recchia 2006).

In this transadriatic framework, it is also important to make reference to other territories, such as the Ionian Islands, to understand the Torre Santa Sabina tumulus.

Lo Porto, in his first analysis of this context (1963, p. 128), found some connections with these areas. In fact, affinities with the Ionian Islands seem interesting and they also reflect some aspects which have not been identified in the analysis of south western Albanian funerary contexts.

For example in cemetery S (Skaros) on Lefkas (MH II) 12 cist tombs were put under a probable mound and were bounded by a ring of stones (diameter 12m). Among these graves a child burial and three ossuaries were found (Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 30-31; Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005, p. 70-76). Also, the cemetery of Kokkolata-Kangelisses at Kephallonia (MH-LH I) has collective cist graves covered by a probable mound (diameter about 18m) but without a ring of stones or central cairn (Kalligas 1978, p. 118).⁸

4. At this moment no analysis of the pottery is able to pinpoint the place of manufacture of these pots.

5. In the early phases, instead, many open shapes of Minyan type, probably locally made, were found in the grave goods, like at Vajzë (grave 12), Vodhinë (graves 15 and 16) and Dukat (grave 30).

6. During the advanced LH IIIC period, a new change in the Aegean system of exchange probably happened, perhaps because of further fragmentation and regionalization of power in the Mycenaean world after the collapse of the palaces. southern Albania (Korçë plain and Aoos valley) once again came within the framework of Aegean relations, in particular with western Greece, according to pottery comparisons (Bejko 1993, p. 118).

7. The swords which have been found in Albanian territory are of Aegean type (C1, C2, D1 of Sandars 1963) but with alterations of the arrangement of rivets on the hilt.

8. This was only assumed by Dörpfeld in the case of the central grave of cemetery S of Lefkas (Dörpfeld 1927, p. 211; Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 31).

Instead, at Oikopeda consisting of a little mound, in the funerary context of LH II-III A1, tombs were likely to be marked by lithic slabs (Marinatos 1932, p. 13).

In spite of structural and chronological differences, these comparisons offer many elements, which have not emerged in the Albanian funerary context analysis but are to be found in the case of the Torre Santa Sabina tumulus.

In the cemeteries of Lefkas and Kephallonia collective cist tombs were discovered in a mound. On Lefkas this kind of tomb has led scholars to look for a possible match in Albania but the ritual of collective graves under a single tumulus is a specific feature of the Ionian Islands (Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 32, 47) and was also found at Torre Santa Sabina in grave 5. The central cairn, of which there was no trace in the Apulian tumulus but which was very widespread in the Albanian funerary contexts, was merely assumed in the case of cemetery S on Lefkas.

In addition, the Torre Santa Sabina stele could be compared to the lithic markings of Oikopeda.

Moreover, in these territories some knives of Aegean type, which could be ascribed to Branigan's type V and Va (Lefkas: Hammond 1974, p. 143) or to Sandars' type Ia (Kephallonia: Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, p. 78), were found.

The comparisons outlined above in the case of each element analyzed refer to different areas and pose some questions about our understanding of the original area of influence of the Torre Santa Sabina tumulus.

Starting with these aspects and taking into consideration the presence of local pottery and child burials in some graves of the Apulian tumulus, it is possible to attach this cemetery to a local relationship group. In all likelihood, grave 12 was connected with a figure who had a particular role in the framework of relations in the Adriatic sea, perhaps without direct successors to judge from the isolated tumulus, in spite of the presence of Mycenaean pottery (LH IIIC) in the settlement of Torre Santa Sabina later (Coppola, Raimondi 1995, p. 389-393; Cinquepalmi 2010).

Therefore, these observations would not require the attribution of the original model for the Torre Santa Sabina tumulus to a specific area but only emphasize the complexity of the relations between the two opposing shores. This funeral context is very peculiar among south eastern Italian burials but equally peculiar in the Albanian tumuli context. The variety of aspects outlined above, typical of several different areas, leads to an emphasis on the wide network of relations present in the southern Adriatic sea and in the Northern Ionian sea shortly after the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C.

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I TUMULI FUNERARI DELL'ETÀ DEL RAME DI SOVIZZO-LOCALITÀ S. DANIELE (VICENZA) ASPETTI COSTRUTTIVI, CRONOLOGICI E CULTUALI

THE COPPER AGE BURIAL MOUNDS AT SOVIZZO, SAN DANIELE
(VICENZA): ARCHITECTURAL, CHRONOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS

Elodia BIANCHIN CITTON*, Claudio BALISTA**

RIASSUNTO

Gli scavi archeologici condotti con soluzione di continuità tra il 1990 e il 2005 per fini edilizi in località San Daniele di Sovizzo (Vicenza) consentirono di documentare evidenze archeologiche di diversa natura di seguito elencate: suolo agrario riferibile a cicli di frequentazione dell'ultimo Neolitico e dell'età del Rame; area abitativa dell'età del Rame; tumulo funerario in terra dell'età del Rame; complesso monumentale dell'età del Rame con strutture funerarie (tumuli) e cultuali (corridoio sacro, massi, stele) costituite da ciottoli e materiali litoidi di diversa natura e dimensioni. Dopo una presentazione di sintesi dei tumuli già noti, si descrivono le diverse fasi dello scavo "microstratigrafico" del tumulo grande del complesso monumentale, i cui aspetti costruttivi e del rituale funerario possono essere così sintetizzati: profonda fossa rettangolare; inumato (individuo adulto) in posizione rannicchiata e in decubito laterale deposto sopra un piccolo selciato di base e ricoperto da una struttura a "piccolo tumulo" di terriccio antropizzato e grossi ciottoli; chiusura della fossa con il terreno di risulta dallo scavo della stessa; infissione di un palo di quercia quale segnacolo temporaneo; successiva monumentalizzazione della tomba con la costruzione del tumulo in ciottoli e pietre calcaree.

ABSTRACT

The archaeological excavations conducted intermittently between 1990 and 2005 during construction work at San Daniele di Sovizzo (Vicenza) have enabled the recording of various archaeological facts: agricultural land that may be related to cycles of occupation at the end of the Late Neolithic and the Copper Age; a Copper Age dwelling; a Bronze Age earth burial mound, a Copper Age monumental complex with funerary structures (tumuli) and religious structures (sacred corridor, rocks, steles) consisting of pebbles and stone materials of various kinds and sizes. After a synthesizing presentation concerning the burial mounds, the different phases of the "micro-stratigraphical" excavation of the Great Tumulus of the monumental complex will be described, including its architecture and funerary ritual: a deep rectangular pit, an inhumation (adult individual) in contracted position and lateral decubitus deposited on a small base slab and covered by a "small tumulus" structure of anthropic earth and large stones; the filling of the pit with the earth removed when it was dug; an oak post pushed in as a temporary marker, later construction of a tumulus of pebbles and limestone rocks as the final monument.

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IL SITO

Il complesso culturale e funerario dell'età del Rame preso in esame è tornato alla luce nel 1990 in località S. Daniele, alla periferia ovest di Sovizzo, un piccolo centro della cintura urbana di Vicenza (*fig. 1a*). Le sue strutture funerarie e culturali di tipo megalitico costituiscono dal 1997 un'area archeologica permanente.

Il sito è posto su un ampio conoide di trasfluenza non più attivo, formatosi a seguito delle esondazioni oloceniche dei torrenti Chiampo e Agno. Il conoide è costituito da un complesso di canali di ghiaie e sabbie con estese coperture limose ed è debolmente rilevato sulla pianura circostante; i suoi depositi sbarrano le valleciole umide che si aprono alla base dei vicini contrafforti rocciosi a litologia calcareo-basaltica, sul margine prealpino dei Lessini.¹

Accertamenti stratigrafici e scavi in *open area* preliminari a piani di edificazione per edilizia privata, condotti con soluzione di continuità tra il 1990 e il 2005,² consentirono di individuare le seguenti evidenze archeologiche di diversa natura comprese fra l'ultimo Neolitico e l'età del Rame (*fig. 1b, c*):

- suolo agrario sepolto formatosi a seguito della rielaborazione dell'orizzonte superiore di un paleosuolo di età medio-olocenica e di inclusi bioarcheologici (frammenti ceramici e ossa animali di piccole dimensioni, selci, carboni, concotto); questi ultimi sono riferibili a cicli di frequentazioni dell'area a fini insediativi e/o agrari e sono databili all'ultimo Neolitico (Cultura dei Vasi a Bocca Quadrata, III Fase) e, in misura minore, all'età del Rame;
- area abitativa dell'età del Rame contraddistinta da pozzetti e fosse con materiali antropici in scarico (ceramiche, selci, ossa, carboni, ecc.); le strutture negative erano disposte ai margini di una piccola “piattaforma in ciottoli” la cui funzione rimane per ora incerta;
- tumulo funerario dell'età del Rame con falde di terra, elevato a copertura di una sepoltura a inumazione di un giovane individuo di sesso maschile con corredo costituito da due punte di freccia in selce;
- complesso monumentale con strutture funerarie (tumuli) e culturali (corridoio sacro, massi, stele) costituite da ciottoli e altri materiali litoidi di varia natura.

Si privilegiano in questa sede le analisi dei contesti pertinenti agli aspetti funerari connessi con le sepolture a tumulo riferendoli, nei casi opportuni, alle altre evidenze archeologiche presenti sull'area, in particolare a quelle di carattere culturale.

IL TUMULO IN TERRA DI VIA ALFIERI

Tornato alla luce nel 1991 tra il lato ovest di via Alfieri e il lato nord del viale degli Alpini, esso fu ubicato in un'area contigua, ma esterna a quella del complesso funerario e culturale di tipo megalitico (*fig. 1c*).³

Il tumulo risultò costituito esclusivamente da falde di terra reperite nelle immediate vicinanze; il suo profilo presentava un abbassamento per erosione del tratto sommitale e la rideposizione dei sedimenti sulle superfici periferiche.

Esso fu elevato direttamente al di sopra di un suolo agrario di età neolitica e a copertura di una sepoltura a inumazione posta nel settore sud-orientale. L'inumato – un giovane individuo di statura di poco inferiore a m 1,40 – era stato deposto in decubito laterale destro con orientamento NS e con gli arti superiori e inferiori lievemente flessi. Il corredo funerario, costituito da due punte di freccia peduncolate a ritocco piatto bifacciale, poste sul capo, ne connotano il sesso maschile. Una datazione radiometrica effettuata direttamente sui frammenti ossei colloca la sepoltura nei secoli di passaggio fra il IV e il III millennio a.C., consentendone l'attribuzione all'età del Rame (*fig. 3, SOVIZZO I*).

1. La sequenza stratigrafica locale include tre superfici di stabilità conservate fra le stratificazioni del conoide e segnate dalla presenza di tre paleosuoli sepolti. Il secondo paleosuolo a partire dall'alto ha restituito resti di frequentazione dell'ultimo Neolitico e dell'età del Rame.
2. Per la storia delle ricerche cf. Bianchin Citton 2004, p. 13-17.
3. Bianchin Citton 2004, p. 33-50.

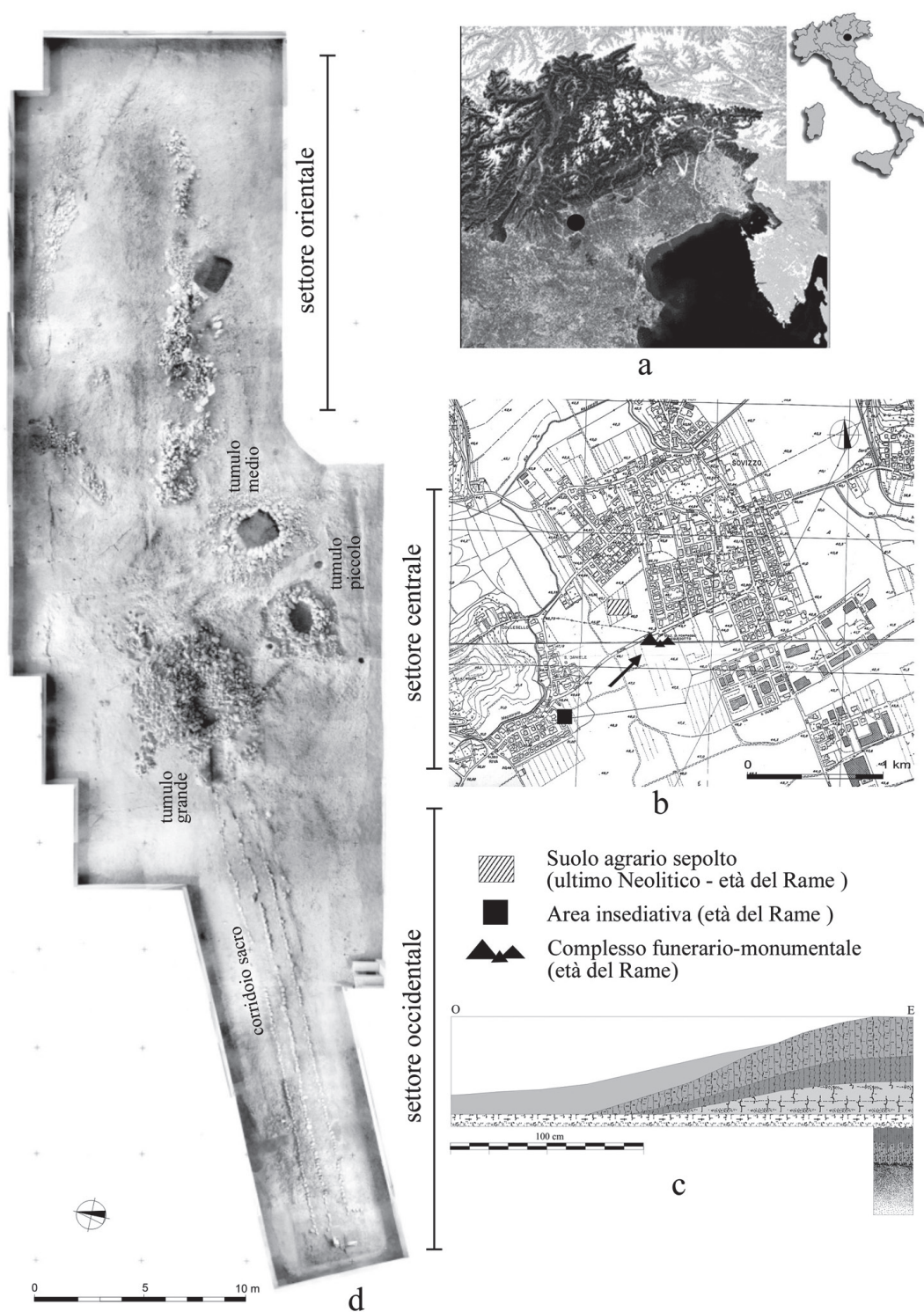


Fig. 1 – Sovizzo-località S. Daniele: a) Ubicazione del sito; b) Localizzazione delle evidenze culturali dell'ultimo Neolitico e dell'età del Rame; c) Tumulo in terra di via Alfieri; d) Complesso monumentale di tipo megalitico dell'età del Rame (elaborazione al computer di C. Balista).

IL COMPLESSO FUNERARIO E CULTUALE DI TIPO MONUMENTALE DI VIALE DEGLI ALPINI E L'ESPLORAZIONE STRATIGRAFICA DEL TUMULO GRANDE

Ai fini di una maggiore comprensione delle problematiche trattate si presenta una breve descrizione del complesso funerario e culturale di tipo megalitico di viale degli Alpini (*fig. 1d*). Esso fu eretto al disopra di una spessa unità stratigrafica tabulare, una sorta di piattaforma delimitata da un modesto fossato anulare, formata dalle matrici del suolo agrario e da quelle del sottostante substrato naturale a ghiaie; detta piattaforma si sviluppa per una lunghezza di m 58,38 in direzione OSO/ENE e presenta un'ampiezza massima di m 14,50 in corrispondenza dell'asse maggiore che risulta avere un orientamento NNO/SSE.

L'area monumentale è costituita da strutture culturali (doppio corridoio con ingresso laterale, stele e massi) nel settore occidentale, da strutture funerarie (tumuli) in quello centrale e da una platea ellittica di pietrame sulla quale poggiano tumuli pervenuti già allo stato residuale nel settore orientale.

Tutte le strutture funerarie e culturali sono state erette sulla piattaforma e sono costituite da pietrame calcareo e da ciottoli di dolomia e basalto di diverse dimensioni prelevati dai circostanti depositi alluvionali e dagli affioramenti rocciosi in esposizione ai margini dei vicini rilievi dei Lessini.⁴

Lo scavo microstratigrafico del tumulo grande (*fig. 2d*) ha costituito un'indagine finalizzata alla documentazione delle modalità costruttive, alla verifica della presenza della sottostante fossa e della relativa sepoltura con il riconoscimento e/o il recupero di elementi riconducibili al rituale funerario. Nel corso dello scavo è stato raccolto tutto il materiale bioarcheologico rinvenuto, purtroppo in quantità esigua, all'interno delle matrici terrose della fossa funeraria e sono state campionate colonne di sedimenti destinate ad analisi micromorfologiche e palinologiche utili alla ricostruzione paleoambientale dell'area circostante il sito.⁵

Al fine di preservare quanto più possibile l'originaria morfologia della struttura funeraria, ora inclusa all'interno dell'area archeologica, l'esplorazione è stata limitata al settore centrale del tumulo. Va precisato che, all'inizio della nostra indagine, l'accumulo in pietre e ciottoli si presentava già esposto a seguito degli scavi di emergenza degli anni 1990-'91, nel corso dei quali erano stati completamente esplorati gli altri due tumuli del settore centrale (*fig. 1d*). In particolare al centro della struttura in pietrame del tumulo grande, risultava evidente un avvallamento più approfondito presso il margine ovest; esso fu interpretato inizialmente come sprofondamento antico del settore centrale del tumulo stesso, in quanto tale depressione sembrava corrispondere all'area subquadrangolare delimitata da grosse pietre calcaree poste di piatto lungo il perimetro della fossa funeraria, analogamente a quanto documentato in corrispondenza del tumulo medio e del tumulo piccolo, già esplorati (*fig. 1d*).⁶

L'asporto dei lembi residui della copertura litoide all'interno dell'avvallamento e l'esplorazione della sottostante superficie in matrice terrosa rappresentarono due momenti cruciali dell'indagine archeologica. Infatti la struttura in pietre del tumulo risultò corrispondere a una sistemazione ordinata di ciottoli disposti secondo precise classi dimensionali e litologiche: al centro ciottoli medio-piccoli in dolomia e calcare dolomitico; al contorno ciottoli medio-grossi in calcari grigi bioclastici e ai margini blocchi calcarei disposti di piatto e in filari sovrapposti, quasi a formare una sorta di "struttura muraria" (*fig. 2a, US 260*). Inoltre un lembo residuo di ciottoli copriva direttamente i sedimenti di riempimento della sottostante fossa sepolcrale e presentava uno sprofondamento nel settore est della stessa. Nel prosieguo dello scavo l'asporto di lembi di ciottoli in sprofondamento all'interno della cosiddetta struttura muraria consentì di individuare i limiti della fossa funeraria (*fig. 2a, US 277*) che, come già rilevato nei due tumuli vicini già scavati, presentava dimensioni lievemente inferiori rispetto alla corona di blocchi calcarei posti di piatto.

Al margine sud-est della fossa sepolcrale, a una quota lievemente inferiore a quella dell'imposta della "struttura muraria" è stata rinvenuta una concentrazione di grossi tizzoni di carbone (*fig. 2b, US 274*)

4. Per una descrizione di dettaglio del Complesso funerario e culturale di tipo monumentale di viale degli Alpini si rimanda a Bianchin Citton 2004, p. 51-81.

5. Nello specifico sono stati sottoposti a determinazione antracologica presso il Centro Agricoltura e Ambiente s.r.l. di Crevalcore (Bologna) i carboni provenienti dalle matrici terrose del tumulo grande (*fig. 2, US 274; US 262 e 2674*).

6. Per una descrizione di dettaglio dei tumuli medio e piccolo si rimanda a Bianchin Citton 2004, p. 68-77.

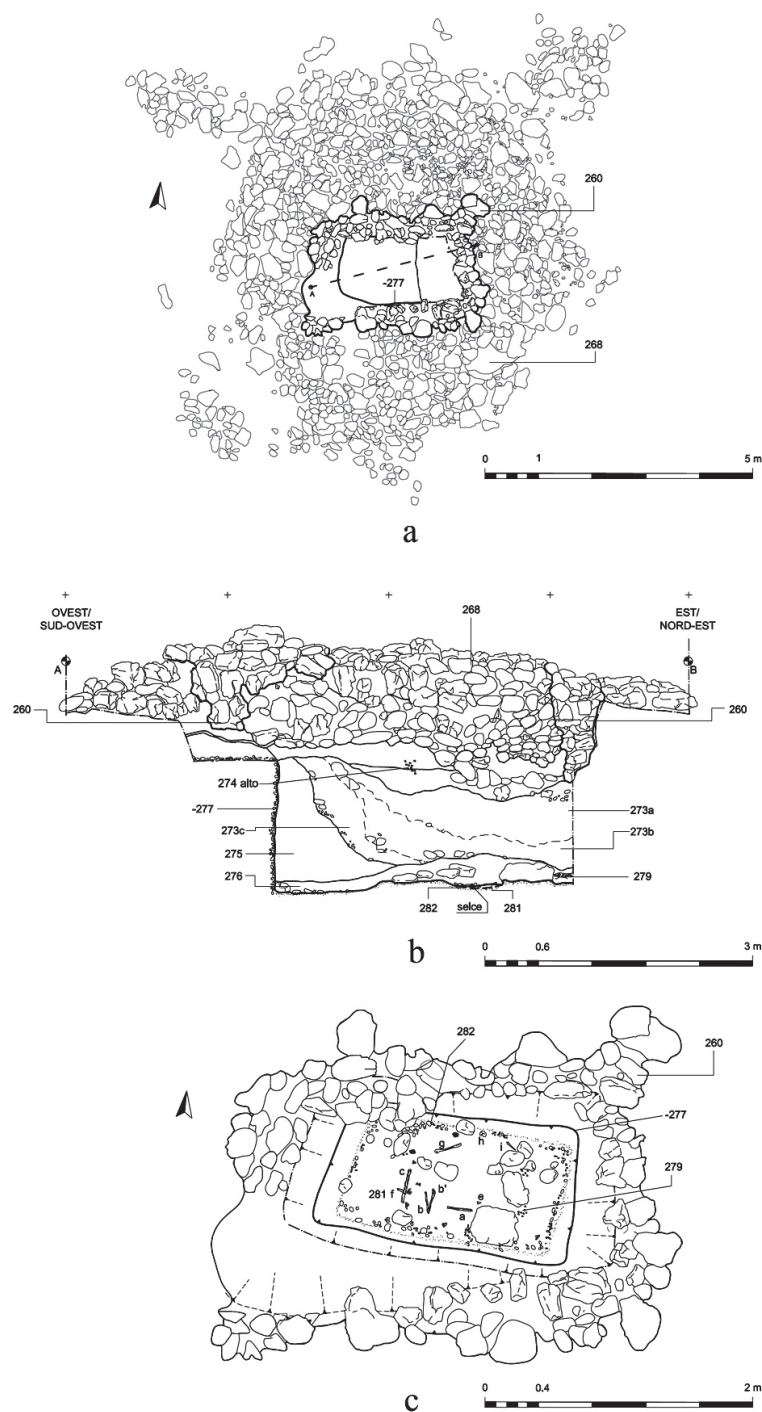


Fig. 2 – Tumulo grande: a) Planimetria con “struttura muraria” (US 260); b) Sezione longitudinale complessiva; c) Visione dall’alto della fossa funeraria con l’esposizione delle parti scheletriche dell’inumato (documentazione grafica di F. Grotto, elaborazione al computer di C. Balista).

distribuiti all’interno di una cavità subverticale di forma cilindrica. L’analisi antracologica ha consentito di determinarne la specie: legno di quercia appartenente assai verosimilmente a un unico reperto, forse una punta di palo irrobustita al fuoco.⁷ L’elemento ligneo, la cui buca di infissione non è stata riscontrata all’interno della struttura del tumulo, rendeva palese l’esistenza di una discontinuità stratigrafica tra le unità di riempimento della fossa sepolcrale e quelle della soprastante copertura di tipo monumentale; le implicazioni di tale discontinuità stratigrafica, quantomeno costruttiva, potrebbero essere connesse ad attività di tipo funzionale e/o rituale; esse verranno valutate tra gli aspetti conclusivi di questo contributo.

7. Determinazione antracologica effettuata presso il Centro Agricoltura e Ambiente s.r.l. di Crevalcore (Bologna).

Nel corso dello scavo archeologico fu possibile documentare la forma della fossa (perimetro rettangolare, pareti verticali e fondo piano) e le dimensioni computate in circa m 1,50 di profondità, m 2 di lunghezza e m 1,25 di larghezza (*fig. 2b, c*). I suoi riempimenti erano costituiti da falde oblique di limi sabbiosi bruni intermescolati a lenti di ghiaietto provenienti dallo scavo dei sedimenti della piattaforma e dei sottostanti substrati del conoide (*fig. 2b, USS 273a, b, c; 275*). Sullo fondo della fossa una sistemazione in grossi ciottoli e pietre in matrice terrosa bruno scuro formava un accumulo compattato in antico (*fig. 2b, c, US 276*), quasi un “piccolo tumulo”⁸ posto a protezione dell’inumato. Dalle matrici argillose del “tumulo piccolo” provengono alcuni minuti frammenti ceramici atipici, una scheggia di selce e frammenti di carboni; pertanto abbiamo motivo di ritenere che il sedimento con gli inclusi bioarcheologici fosse stato intenzionalmente prelevato da un’area antropizzata circostante il complesso funerario e culturale. Un campione di carbone di specie non determinabile proveniente dalle matrici terrose del “piccolo tumulo”, è stato sottoposto a datazione radiometrica (*fig. 3, SOVIZZO 3*).

L’inumato, assai verosimilmente un giovane adulto con le parti scheletriche in cattivo stato di conservazione (*fig. 2c, US 281*), era stato deposto in posizione flessa sul fianco sinistro sopra una sistemazione a ciottoletti calcarei che formavano un piccolo selciato (*fig. 2c, US 282*).⁹

CRONOLOGIA, ASPETTI COSTRUTTIVI E CULTURALI

Vengono presentati i risultati ottenuti dalle due datazioni radiometriche ¹⁴C con tecnica AMS effettuate sui due campioni di materiale antracologico proveniente dal tumulo grande (*fig. 3, US 274 – alto: carboni dalla cosiddetta buca di palo; US 279: carboni dal “piccolo tumulo” alla base della fossa*).

Come riportato nella tabella cronologica (*fig. 3*) le datazioni assolute dei due campioni (SOVIZZO 2, SOVIZZO 3) presentano un notevole divario temporale dal momento che sono riferibili rispettivamente ai secoli intorno alla metà del IV millennio cal. B.C. (SOVIZZO 2) e ai secoli intorno all’ultimo quarto del IV millennio cal. B.C. (SOVIZZO 3) (con 1 σ).

In attesa di dirimere la questione cronologica relativa alle due date sopra citate alla luce di una nuova datazione radiometrica attualmente in corso su resti ossei dell’inumato,¹⁰ allo stato attuale si ritiene che i carboni raccolti nei sedimenti basali della fossa appartengano a materiale antracologico residuale proveniente – al pari di quello archeologico (frustoli ceramici, scheggia di selce) – dagli orizzonti antropizzati del suolo agrario circostante il complesso monumentale, che, come noto,¹¹ rielaborano elementi culturali dell’ultimo Neolitico e dell’età del Rame.

Si deve alle caratteristiche della curva di calibrazione e alla presenza di ampie *wiggles* nel periodo compreso tra la seconda metà del IV e gli inizi del III millennio cal. B.C. se i due campioni SOVIZZO 1 e SOVIZZO 2 – relativi rispettivamente al tumulo in terra di via Alfieri e al tumulo grande dell’area monumentale – pur con età radiometriche diverse, vengono ad individuare in cronologia calibrata ambiti temporali in parte sovrapponibili (*fig. 3*) riferibili all’età del Rame.¹²

Per quanto attiene agli aspetti strutturali con implicazioni culturali si considera la discontinuità stratigrafica segnalata dall’elemento ligneo di quercia US 274 del tumulo grande. Qualora detta discontinuità fosse solo costruttiva, la datazione radiometrica (*fig. 3, SOVIZZO 2*) fornirebbe un elemento di cronologia

8. Un primo livello di matrici terrose compattate in antico al di sopra dell’inumato fu osservato anche nel corso dello scavo del tumulo in terra di via Alfieri (Bianchin Citton 2004, p. 35, *fig. 21, US 260a3*).

9. Determinazione antropologica di C. Ravedoni e A. Mattucci, ARCO-Cooperativa di ricerche archeobiologiche, Laboratorio di Archeobiologia dei Musei Civici di Como.

10. Datazione radiometrica ¹⁴C con tecnica AMS in corso presso il Radiocarbon Laboratory del Centre for Isotope Research di Groningen (Olanda).

11. Bianchin Citton 2004, p. 25-31, 46-50.

12. L’elaborazione delle date ¹⁴C è stata effettuata da Nicoletta Martinelli.

assoluta sia per la sepoltura sia per il tumulo; se invece essa assumesse anche un valore di intervallo cronologico tra le attività relative alla predisposizione della sepoltura entro fossa e la costruzione del tumulo stesso, si potrebbe postulare un divario temporale, anche se da noi non quantificabile, tra il rito dell'inumazione dentro la fossa e la monumentalizzazione della tomba a mezzo del tumulo in pietre e ciottoli.

Nel merito non va tralasciato di ricordare che, per la sua imponenza, il complesso funerario e culturale di tipo megalitico di viale degli Alpini dovette essere costruito in momenti diversi (anche se ragionevolmente vicini nel tempo) e che solo alcuni elementi, quali la grande piattaforma e il piccolo fossato che la delimitava, sono da ritenersi costruiti nello stesso momento.

Correlazioni spaziali – con implicazioni di tipo rituale e culturale – intercorrono inoltre tra il corridoio sacro e il tumulo grande. Il corridoio sacro è una particolare struttura a tre filari paralleli di pietre e ciottoli di dimensioni medie e grandi allettati su una stesura di limi sabbiosi bruno-giallastri.¹³ I filari, orientati secondo un allineamento NNO/SSE, formano una doppia corsia che si sviluppa per una lunghezza complessiva di m 22,50 e presenta un'ampiezza massima di circa m 2 in prossimità dell'ingresso posto ad ovest e m 1,40 presso la chiusura “ad abside”, quest'ultima significativamente ubicata ad est, di fronte al tumulo grande (*fig. 1d*).

Provenienza campione	US	Nome campione	Codice laboratorio	Età radiometrica B.P.	Datazione calibrata cal. B.C. 1σ	Datazione calibrata cal. B.C. 2σ
Tumulo in terra	US 252	SOVIZZO 1	GrA-15626	4430 ± 60	3320 -2920	3340-2910
Area megalitica	US 274-alto	SOVIZZO 2	GrA-31095	4535 ± 35	3360-3110	3370-3100
Area megalitica	US 279	SOVIZZO 3	Beta-21585	4790 ± 40	3640-3520	3660-3380
Lottizzazione Visonà	US 64	SOVIZZO 4	Beta-31096	4120 ± 40	2860-2610	2880-2570

Fig. 3 – Risultati delle datazioni radiocarboniche AMS; la calibrazione è stata eseguita sulla curva di calibrazione Intcal04, utilizzando il programma OxCal versione 3.1 (Bronk Ramsey 2001); per facilità di consultazione sono riportati solo i due estremi superiore e inferiore dei diversi intervalli cronologici identificati attraverso il calcolo della distribuzione della probabilità. GrA = Centre for Isotope Research, University of Groningen, Groningen, Paesi Bassi; Beta = Beta Analytic, Inc., Miami, Florida, Stati Uniti (aggiornamento di N. Martinelli alla relazione Dendrodata s.a.s., archivio della Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici del Veneto).

Il percorso cerimoniale verso la zona funeraria richiese la conservazione a vista, almeno in via temporanea, degli elementi litici che formavano il corridoio sacro, e ancor più dei massi e della stele che ne segnavano l'ingresso;¹⁴ è pertanto verosimile che la copertura e la composizione litologica del tumulo grande (come del resto degli altri due tumuli vicini) dovettero rispondere ad analoghi criteri di visibilità e di rappresentazione sociale e ideologica.

Sulle medesime unità della grande piattaforma insistono pure il tumulo medio e il tumulo piccolo (*fig. 1c*) per i quali non disponiamo di dati di cronologia assoluta. Oltre all'elemento strutturale basale, costituito dalla piattaforma, essi hanno in comune con il tumulo grande le modalità costruttive rappresentate dalla cosiddetta struttura muraria di contenimento formata da grosse pietre calcaree poste di piatto e collocate attorno alla fossa con funzione di contrafforte a sorreggere il sovraccarico del tumulo in pietre e terra; comune è pure il rito funerario dell'inumazione primaria di un singolo individuo dentro una fossa di forma subrettangolare.

Lo scavo microstratigrafico del grande tumulo ha inoltre consentito di documentare i contesti associati al rituale sepolcrale in tutta la loro complessità: la presenza di una fossa alquanto profonda con il piccolo selciato di base, la posizione rannicchiata in decubito laterale dell'inumato, la struttura a “piccolo tumulo”

13. Bianchin Citton 2004, p. 59-67.

14. Bianchin Citton 2004, p. 63, fig. 48-49.

con terriccio antropizzato e grossi ciottoli; la chiusura della fossa con il terreno di risulta dello scavo della fossa stessa e il suo livellamento superficiale, l'infissione di un palo di quercia con punta irrobustita al fuoco sulla superficie della fossa definitivamente sigillata (fig. 2a, b, c). Abbiamo motivo di ritenere, per confronto con altri contesti funerari e culturali dell'età del Rame dell'Italia settentrionale,¹⁵ che il palo di quercia abbia rappresentato almeno in via temporanea il segnacolo della tomba. Dopo la sistemazione delle unità partecipi più strettamente del rito funerario che si conclude "sottoterra", si procedette alla strutturazione delle unità stratigrafiche connesse con la rappresentazione del ruolo pubblico ascrivito al defunto, ottenuto con la monumentalizzazione della tomba a mezzo della costruzione del tumulo; le sue dimensioni ne evidenzierebbero al contempo la gerarchia, in linea parentale o sociale, rispetto ai due tumuli vicini, di grandezza inferiore e scalare.

La "struttura muraria" che racchiude il perimetro della fossa sepolcrale e nel medesimo tempo la protegge dall'imponente accumulo di pietre e ciottoli, parrebbe richiamare la presenza di una "piccola camera" interposta tra la fossa sepolcrale e la copertura a tumulo; questo elemento costruttivo verrebbe pertanto ad assumere anche un significato culturale.

Inoltre la presenza del terriccio antropizzato posto a copertura dello scheletro, quasi a formare un "piccolo tumulo", avrebbe potuto corrispondere ad un rito agrario di fertilità. Alla luce dei nuovi dati di scavo verrebbe pertanto confermata l'attribuzione del complesso monumentale di Sovizzo-viale degli Alpini a un gruppo umano dell'età del Rame¹⁶ contrassegnato da legami d'identità sociale di tipo parentale, egemone su un territorio che i dati paleobotanici documenterebbero altamente antropizzato e sfruttato dal punto di vista agrario senza soluzione di continuità dall'ultimo Neolitico a tutta l'età del Rame.¹⁷

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15. Barfield 2007, p. 521.

16. Bianchin Citton 2004, p. 95-98.

17. Il paesaggio vegetale emerso dagli spettri pollinici è nel complesso piuttosto aperto e deforestato; boschi di Querce, Carpini e Olmi dovevano colonizzare soprattutto i vicini margini collinari. L'attività antropica risulta legata principalmente ai cereali (orzo e frumento) e in particolare alla loro coltivazione nelle aree circostanti il sito monumentale (relazione di M. Marchesini e S. Marvelli, archivio della Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici del Veneto).

NEW EVIDENCE OF ANCESTRAL LANDSCAPE IN TRENTINO IN THE COPPER AND BRONZE AGES THE RITUAL SITES OF CLES-CAMPI NERI AND LA VELA DI TRENTO

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Franco NICOLIS***, Nicola DEGASPERI****

ABSTRACT

Recent investigations (1999-2007) carried out at the site of Cles-Campi Neri in the Valle di Non have brought to light a circular stone structure which can be attributed to a period between the Late Copper Age and the initial phase of the Early Bronze Age. Two structural phases have been identified. The earlier one saw the presence of a large enclosure made up of large blocks enclosing a smaller structure. The items found at the upper levels are made up of flint tools altered by heat. There are also small agglomerations of calcined human bones. In the subsequent phase the area inside the large enclosure was filled in with a platform made up of stones and pebbles, covered and surrounded by organic soil, in which hundreds of flint tools and flakes have been found, along with rarer fragments of pottery. The agglomerations of calcined human bones continue in this phase. Other circular stone structures are positioned along the external perimeter of the platform. Initial analysis of the structural context and the overall material culture, the presence of probable food offerings, suggested by palaeobotanical analysis, and of cremated human remains, make it possible to surmise that the site may have been linked to ritual practices or complex funeral rites.

There are considerable similarities between the site of Cles-Campi Neri and the funeral and cult complex dating back to the Copper Age discovered in 2006 at La Vela di Trento (sector Vela IX) in the Adige valley.

The cult area developed diachronically according to the principle of horizontal stratigraphy, illustrating the progressive extension of the structure from the centre towards the outside. It was made up of a series of stone rings delimiting the structured platforms. The placing of the remains of human skeletons and animal remains, mostly calcined, on these has been documented, along with archaeological material including flint tools, parts of copper and stone ornaments and occasional pottery sherds. It has also been ascertained that fires were lit. A baby was found buried in a jar (*pithos* burial) in the southern part of the area investigated. This can be attributed to the Early Bronze Age.

The structure brought to light at La Vela very probably represents evidence of more extensive rites and funeral practices linked to the cult of ancestors, according to a practice also documented in other alpine areas.

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INTRODUCTION¹

This paper intends to provide an initial summary of the results of excavations carried out at the cult sites of Campi Neri near Cles, in the Val di Non (western Trentino) and La Vela (Trento) in the Adige valley (fig. 1), despite the fact that processing of the data acquired and study of material from both sites is still at a very early stage.

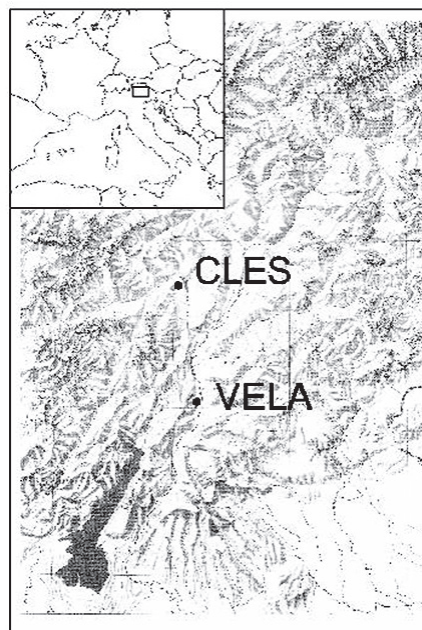


Fig. 1 – Sites location map.

CLES-CAMPI NERI

Since the beginning of the 19th c., the Campi Neri area (676m a.s.l.) has been known to have provided a significant number of findings dating back to the period between the Early Bronze Age and the Roman period (Campi 1887; Campi 1891, p. 69-75; Campi 1909, p. 307-312; Giovanelli 1828), including the so-called *Tabula Clesiana*, a sheet of bronze carrying the edict with which the Emperor Claudius granted Roman citizenship to the local populations in 46 A.D. (*CIL* V, 5050; Mommsen 1869; Buonopane 1990, p. 194-195, no. 5050; Buchi 2000, p. 75-80; Tozzi 2002).

The research carried out between 1999 and 2007 by the Soprintendenza per i beni archeologici di Provincia autonoma di Trento over a surface area of more than 7000 sq. m emphasized the fundamentally important role of the site, frequented almost continuously from the Copper Age up to the Roman period (Ciurletti *et al.* 2004; Endrizzi *et al.* 2009).²

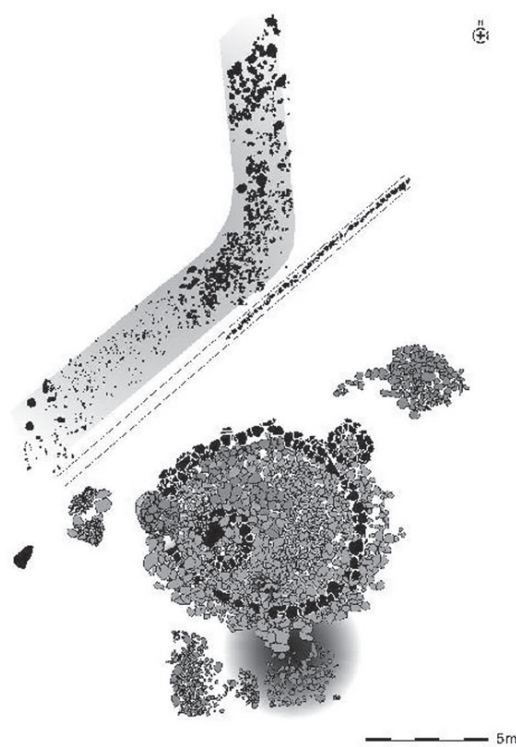
The data currently available demonstrates the existence of a large well-organized sanctuary area, the real size being unknown, crossed by tracks and marked by ceremonies involving the deposition of votive offerings, the sacrifice of animals and the ritual use of fire.

1. In this paper section 2 (Cles-Campi Neri) has been written by Lorenza Endrizzi and Nicola Degasperi, section 3 (La Vela in Trento) by Elisabetta Mottes and Nicola Degasperi and section 4 (conclusions) by Elisabetta Mottes and Franco Nicolis. Figures and photographs have been processed and designed by Nicola Degasperi and Chiara Maggioni (CORA Ricerche Archeologiche s.n.c., Trento). English translation by Vivienne Frankell.

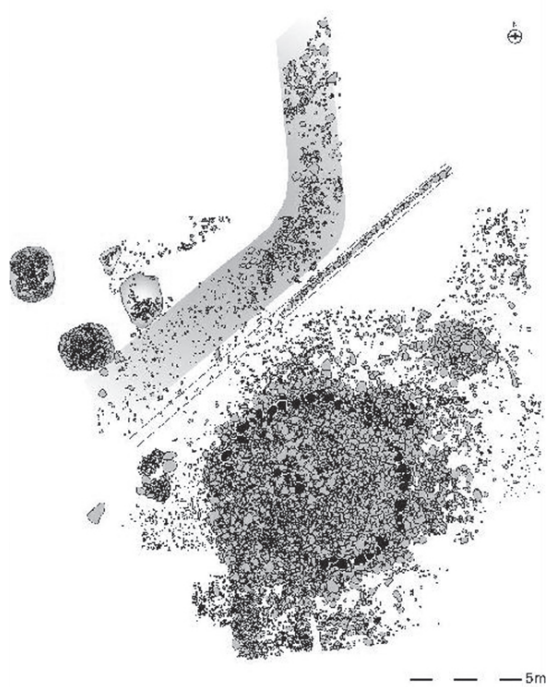
2. The research, headed by Lorenza Endrizzi, was carried out by CORA Ricerche Archeologiche s.n.c., Trento, under the supervision of Nicola Degasperi.



*Fig. 2 – Cles-Campi Neri (Trento).
Phase 1.*



*Fig. 3 – Cles-Campi Neri (Trento).
Phase 2.*



*Fig. 4 – Cles-Campi Neri (Trento).
Phase 3.*



*Fig. 5 – Cles-Campi Neri (Trento).
Phase 4.*

The area is situated on the gentle slope of a terrace made up of typical deposits from the deglaciation. The data currently available allow us to surmise that between the Copper Age and the Late Bronze Age, but perhaps also in subsequent phases, the environment was humid, with short-lived areas of stagnant water. Major containment and drainage works also show that considerable attention was paid to controlling the colluvial dynamics of the slopes and the management of flowing water. Indeed, starting from the end of the Bronze Age, an impressive linear structure 230m long made with large blocks of stone, pebbles and earth and a series of drainage channels designed to drain off water flowing down the slope were realized above the cult area. These works had the scope of hindering colluvial processes which began in the later phases of the Bronze Age, probably as a result of advanced deforestation, and which had led to the progressive obliteration of the Copper Age structures.

In the most southerly sector of the site, excavations of a more or less circular structure, with a diameter of around 8.50m, have been carried out (*fig. 10*). Thanks to flint tools and pottery, this can be dated to a period between the Copper Age and the initial phase of the Early Bronze Age.

The excavations brought to light numerous remains of old tree stumps throughout the area, some of which showing signs of uprooting with the use of fire. This evidence would seem to demonstrate the presence of forest and the human intervention aiming to delimit an open space, which was probably the first step in the process to define a “human” space to be used for cult activities and for the establishment of a cultural landscape.

Close to the structure, there is a marked bend in a probable “road”, which headed straight towards the North, made up of small stones covered with beaten earth, part of which has a small drainage channel running alongside it.

Roads with clear sacred and ritual roles are a constant element in every stage of frequentation of the site. The two oldest tracks, corresponding with phases of relative hydrogeological stability, are found above the imposing line of stones. The first, which has already been mentioned, can be attributed to the Copper Age and beginning of the Early Bronze Age (*fig. 2*). The second, recorded for a length of more than 200m and dating back to the Later Bronze Age, also made a bend close to the platform, which must therefore still have been visible and respected (*fig. 5*).

In this paper we present a summary of the sequences in the main phases of this monument, paying particular attention to the structural and cult aspects. These phases will be identified more precisely in chronological terms following full study of the remains of the material culture.

In the earliest phase the structure was made up of a broad ring made with large blocks, which enclosed in an eccentric position a smaller circular structure (with a diameter of 2.9m) made up of large stones and superimposed slabs (*fig. 10c*).

The top of the smaller structure, covered with slabs of metamorphic rock, was perhaps used for the lighting of fires. One should also note the presence of a large rough-hewn boulder inside the same structure. This was found lying on its side but was probably originally erect (*fig. 10c*). There were other traces of combustion and cremated bones in a small ditch situated close to the smaller enclosure. Outside the main enclosure, to the east, a small stone enclosure backs onto the structure, whereas a short distance away there is a subcircular platform with a high concentration of flint tools. The materials relating to the first phase are represented by flint tools, sometimes altered by heat (*fig. 6-9*). There are also small piles of calcined human bones (*fig. 10a*).

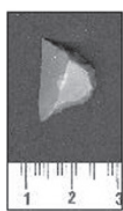


Fig. 6 – Cles-Campi Neri (Trento). Flint crescent.

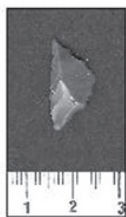


Fig. 7 – Cles-Campi Neri (Trento). Flint crescent.

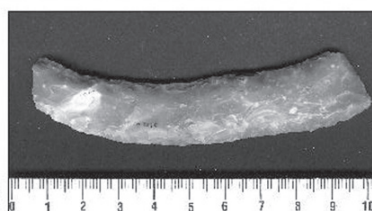


Fig. 8 – Cles-Campi Neri (Trento). Flint sickle blade.

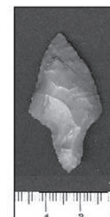


Fig. 9 – Cles-Campi Neri (Trento). Flint arrowhead.

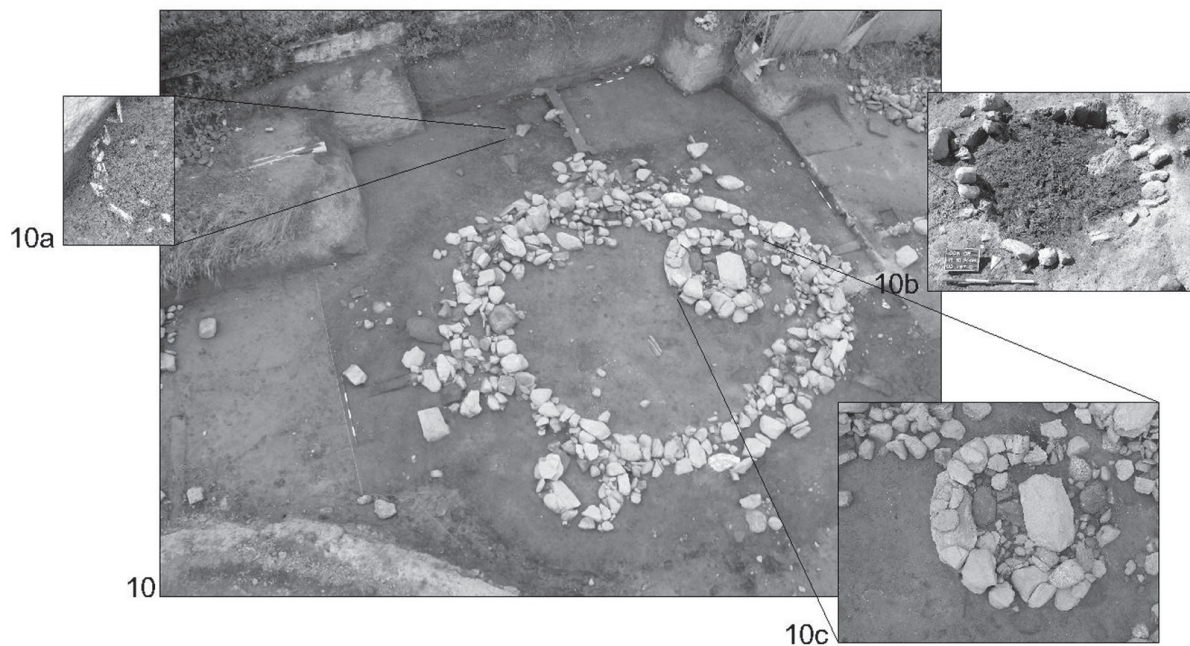


Fig. 10 – Cles-Campi Neri (Trento). View of the structures of phase 1. a) cremated human bones; b) combustion pit; c) detail of the internal stone ring.

In the second phase the internal area of the large ring was filled with stones and pebbles in order to realize a platform (*fig. 3*), on which collections of calcined human bones were found. These are also present outside the southern limit of the platform, dispersed over a vast area. The western perimeter of the ring was interrupted by a fire pit, containing stones altered by the effect of heat and charcoal. The lighting of limited local fires also continued above the platform, as is shown by the substantial presence of charcoal.

In the third phase the stretch of the main enclosure which had been interrupted by the fire pit was reconstructed; the platform was also further raised by adding more stones and pebbles (*fig. 4*).

Perhaps starting from the end of the third phase, the platform was sealed with a small earth mound (*fig. 5*). The presence of this covering has not been recognized at stratigraphic level, but is however suggested by analysis of the spatial distribution of findings. Indeed, hundreds of flint tools and flakes have been found around the perimeter band of the structure, together with rare pottery fragments, which were presumably ritual offerings.

The paleobotanical analysis carried out on an initial group of samples has shown the presence of at least eight types of wood, cereals (barley, emmer wheat and foxtail millet), pulses (lentils) and charred remains which can perhaps be attributed to unidentified prepared food.³

Initial analysis of the peculiarity of the monumental structure, the presence of flint tools which were often broken or altered, shattered pottery fragments and probable charred food offerings and of the “controlled” dispersion of cremated human remains suggests that the context of Campi Neri was a cult place, partly linked to burial rites and practices, the details of which are still to be defined.

During the subsequent Middle Bronze Age, close to this ancient structure, which was evidently recalled for a long period of time, there is evidence of the lighting of fires in shallow circular pits around 20cm deep, then filled with stones and accompanied by parts of cattle skulls (*fig. 10b*).

3. Analysis underway by Elisabetta Castiglioni from the Laboratorio di Archeobiologia dei Musei Civici di Como.

LA VELA IN TRENTO (SECTOR VELA IX, EXCAVATION 2006)⁴

The archaeological site of La Vela is situated in the area north-west of the city of Trento and covers part of the large alluvial cone formed by the stream of the same name, close to its confluence with the River Adige (*fig. 1*).

La Vela (Trento) is one of the most significant sites in terms of archaeological research in the alpine area, due both to the stratigraphic sequence identified, which documents long human frequentation of the area from the early Mesolithic up to the Roman period, and the significance of the prehistoric evidence brought to light, particularly as regards the Middle Neolithic (Square Mouthed Pottery Culture) (Bagolini 1977; Bagolini 1990a; Bagolini 1990b; Pedrotti 1990; Degasper, Pedrotti 2002a; Degasper, Pedrotti 2002b; Degasper *et al.* 2006; Mottes, Rottoli 2006; Mottes 2007; Mottes forthcoming).

The presence of archaeological deposits is currently documented in ten distinct sectors (Vela I-X) which from 1960 to 2009 were opened up following the digging of foundations for construction purposes (*fig. 11*).

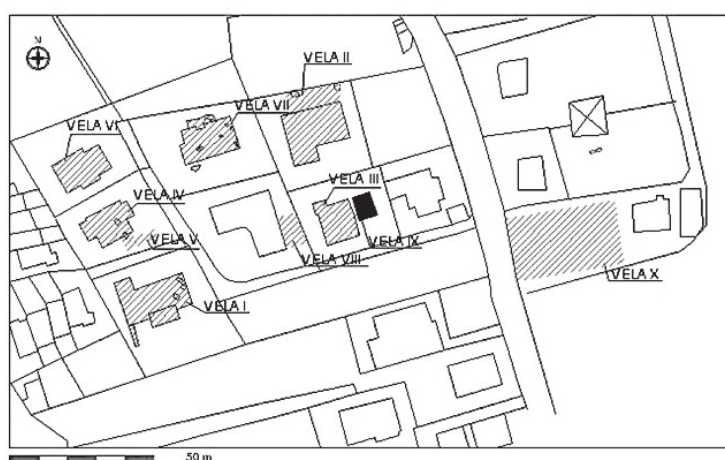


Fig. 11 – La Vela di Trento. Excavation's sectors (Vela I-X).

In May 2006, in view of work to extend a building in an area already subjected to archaeological investigations in 1976 (sector Vela III) (Bagolini *et al.* 1976), the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici di Provincia autonoma di Trento, planned stratigraphic investigation in one area of the lot which had not yet been explored (sector Vela IX). The research, carried out over a surface area of just 45 sq. m, brought to light an extraordinary Copper Age cult and funeral area, which is currently unique in the Adige valley (*fig. 15, 17*).

The exceptional state of conservation of the structure is due to the fact that it was realized in a raised position on an old gravel bar of the Vela stream, protecting the area from the flooding and erosion which characterized the environment of the stream cone.

The cult area is made up of a series of stone rings and developed over time according to horizontal stratigraphy, showing a progressive extension of the structure from the centre towards the outside (*fig. 15*). This stratigraphic data has been confirmed by the spatial distribution of the findings, by archaeobotanical analysis and in particular by anthracological analysis, which highlights the predominance of individual *Taxa* in the different structures.⁵

4. The research, headed by Elisabetta Mottes, was carried out by CORA Ricerche Archeologiche s.n.c., Trento, under the supervision of Nicola Degasper.

5. The archaeobotanical analysis carried out by the Laboratorio di Archeobiologia dei Musei Civici di Como was supervised by Mauro Rottoli in relation to the carpological remains (Rottoli 2008) and by Michela Cottini in relation to the anthracological remains (Cottini 2008).



Fig. 12 – La Vela di Trento (sector Vela IX). Copper Age flint sickle blade.

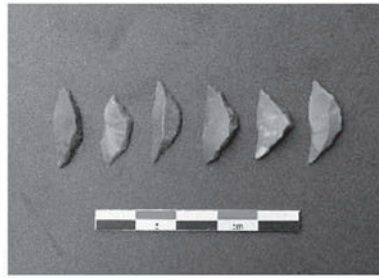


Fig. 13 – La Vela di Trento (sector Vela IX). Copper Age flint crescents.

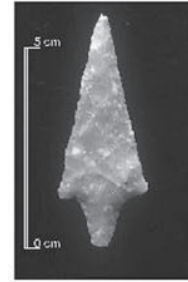


Fig. 14 – La Vela di Trento (sector Vela IX). Copper Age flint arrowhead of the long triangular Remedello style.

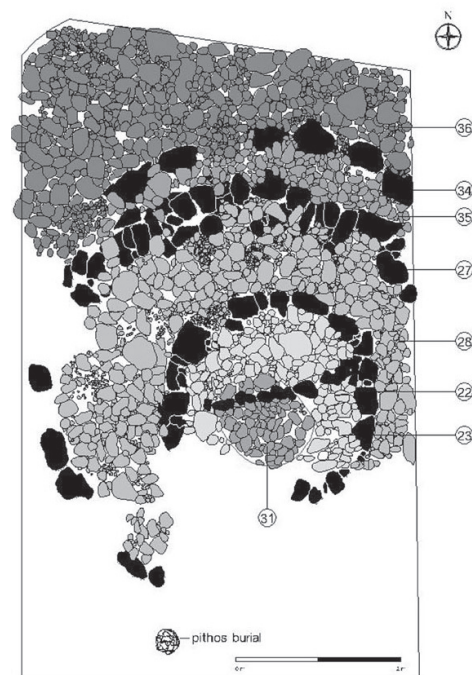
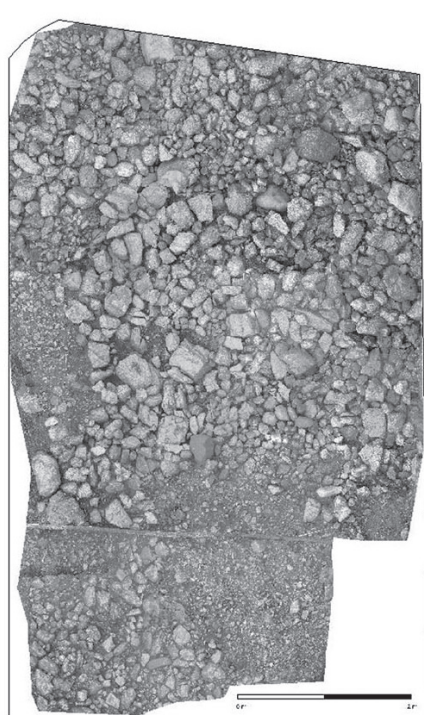


Fig. 15 – La Vela di Trento (sector Vela IX). Copper Age cult and funeral area built with a series of stone rings defining structured platforms (photo and plan).

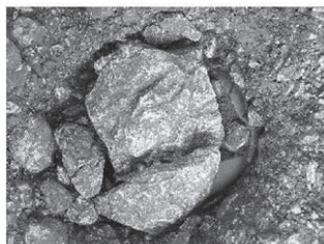


Fig. 16 – La Vela di Trento (sector Vela IX). Early Bronze Age jar covered with two stone slabs and containing the burial of a baby (pithos burial). The bottom of the jar has been chipped away in ancient times.



Fig. 17 – La Vela di Trento (sector Vela IX).
Copper Age cult and funeral area.



Fig. 18 – La Vela di Trento (sector Vela IX). Detail of
the ring US 27, which on the northern side is built
with two superimposed lines of stones.

Awaiting the results of new radiocarbon dating underway at Leibniz Labor in Kiel and the completion of specialist analysis, it is possible to suggest a sequence for the main phases of evolution of the cult area:

- a layer of fine rubble and gravel was laid artificially to prepare for the raising of the stone structures, over the alluvial deposits of the Vela stream;
- the inner ring (US 22) of the cult area was constructed using selected stone material (Scaglia Rossa) (fig. 15). The perimeter of the ring delimited a platform structure (US 23) that was probably constructed around an element in larch wood (*Larix decidua*) fixed in a vertical position. There is evidence of cremated human bones, unburnt human bones and the calcined remains of animals on the platform;⁶
- at a subsequent phase the central wooden element was uprooted (perhaps burnt). The pit was closed and carefully sealed with a row of stones, which divided the perimeter of the stratigraphic unit 22 in two. A second ring of stones was prepared (US 27) with at least two superimposed lines of stones on the northern side (fig. 18). The interior saw the building of a second platform (US 28) (fig. 15), which was constructed around a small mound of earth covering the older structure. The presence of this covering has left few traces (US 8). It was not recognized during the excavations, being surmised subsequently on the basis of comparative analysis of the data. The leaving of small piles of cremated human bones continued on the platform, in a more accentuated manner. The archaeological material recovered has included numerous flint instruments (fig. 12-14), copper tools and ornaments and some pottery sherds. Furthermore, there is evidence of the lighting of fires with beech wood (*Fagus sylvatica*). Radiocarbon dating obtained on a burnt human bone coming from the platform (US 28) gave the following measurement: KIA31837: 4510±35 B.P., corresponding to 3340-3100 B.C. cal.;⁷
- the cult area was further extended towards the north, with the adding of a further ring of stones (US 34) and the laying of a new platform (US 35) (fig. 15). Unfortunately the stratigraphic situation to the south was compromised by subsequent events;
- the central rings were covered with further earth and a large platform (US 36) was constructed, the real dimensions of which we do not know but which was probably delimited by a stone

6. The anthropological analysis was carried out by Alessandra Mazzucchi (Laboratorio di Antropologia e Odontologia Forense dell'Università degli Studi di Milano and Osteoarch Lab).

7. The radiocarbon measurements expressed in B.P. have been calibrated to give calendar dating (B.C.) using the software OxCal 3.10, selecting the intervals with 1 sigma, on the basis of atmospheric data provided by Reimer and other authors (2004).

enclosure similar to previous ones (*fig. 15*). A drastic reduction in the concentration of calcined bones has been recorded for this phase, whereas the quantity of flint tools and pottery (typologically not diagnostic) increased. The lighting of fires is documented by the presence of two distinct concentrations of anthracological remains: hazel (*Corylus avellana*) to the west and oak (*Quercus sez. Robur*) to the east. The carpological remains include hazel (*Corylus avellana*), present in all the phases, and a particular abundance of cornel wood (*Cornus mas*), which is practically absent in the more internal structures. Radiocarbon dating is available for this phase, obtained on a sample of charcoal which assigns this period of frequentation to a final phase of the Early Bronze Age: KIA 30563: 3381±28 B.P., corresponding to 1735-1630 B.C. cal.

To the south of the structured area, a baby was found buried in a ceramic jar (*pithos* burial) (*fig. 16*).

This is a funeral rite that is documented in Northern Italy only during the Early Bronze Age and only in Trentino, in particular in the Adige valley. It was reserved for newborn babies or foetuses, which were placed almost exclusively in jars, in their turn placed in graves and covered with small slabs of stone (Nicolis 2001; Nicolis 2004; Nicolis 2005).

It has recently been suggested that the jar burial rite was linked to contacts with the Ionian islands and Peloponnese (Greece), most probably through the intermediation of coeval cultures situated along the two sides of the Adriatic sea (Nicolis 2005, p. 530).

Anthropological analysis has shown that this was an individual aged between 0 and 6 months. The mouth of the jar was sealed with two flat stones (*fig. 16*), whereas inside there was the tooth of a sheep or goat (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*). One extremely significant fact, unique in terms of the evidence available for the Adige valley area to date, should also be noted: the bottom of the jar was missing and had been clearly chipped away in ancient times (*fig. 16*). During the excavation of the *pithos* burial, which was done in the laboratory, it was thought that the opening on the base could have a practical function in terms of inserting the body of the child. After restoration it was instead possible to observe that the mouth of the jar was wider than the hole realized in the base. It was therefore surmised that the hole on the bottom had a practical and ideological role: the direct contact with the gravel substratum would indeed have assisted the rapid outflow of liquids resulting from decomposition, accelerating the process of body transformation, which in the anthropological context is given particular significance (Favole 2003).

Preliminary anthropological investigations have shown that the bone material coming from the cult area was mainly cremated and is represented by skull fragments, the main section of long bones and fragments of teeth, whereas there are no fragments of spongy bone, pelvis or the spine. There are also remains of unburnt human bones (phalanges, metacarpals, teeth and fragments of jaw). From the demographic point of view the fragments analyzed show the presence of several individuals, both adults and children, these last with an age of between 0 and 6 months.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the two Trentino sites highlights also a number of common features in relation to structural, ritual and chronological aspects as also demonstrated at other cult sites in the alpine area, such as Velturmo/Feldthurns, Tanzgasse (Bolzano/Bozen) for example (Dal Ri *et al.* 2004) and those documented in the Valcamonica and the Valtellina in eastern Lombardia (Poggiani Keller 2006).

From the structural point of view, at both sites the presence of stone circles and probably coverings represented by mounds of earth has been recorded. However, it should be underlined that the sites examined should not be considered as genuine tumuli but rather as complex structures taking different forms at the various stages of development.

In terms of rituals, the leaving of selected cremated human remains and of burnt and unburnt animals has been documented. There is archaeological material that can be interpreted as grave goods or as offerings. There is also evidence of the deposition of fruit, cereals and prepared food. The presence of fires is a constant.

At both sites there is documentation of extensive continuity in terms of frequentation for ritual purposes. The Cles Campi Neri sites shows continuity of frequentation of the same area for the purposes of cult continuing from the Copper Age up to Late Antiquity. At La Vela, near Trento, evidence of activities linked to worship relates to the Copper Age and the Early Bronze Age. A long period of continuity in terms of use is a recurring characteristic of burial and cult sites in other Italian regions.⁸ They were not simply places destined for the burial of members of a community, but central places, where the cultural memory was maintained, becoming a tool for claiming identity through the cult of mythical ancestors. Moreover the place where a mythical event took place is by itself a sacred place and it must be preserved also with the help of the new architecture. These places were thus genuine ancestral landscapes.

There are some differences between the two sites, first of all the presence of *pithos* burial rites for babies, only recorded at La Vela. It is appropriate to recall that in northern Italy this type of burial rite is currently only documented in the Trentino stretch of the Adige valley and usually took place in rock shelters or at the base of rock faces; for the first time, at La Vela, it has been documented in an open area on a cone. Typologically, the jar would seem to belong to a later phase of the Early Bronze Age, in contrast with previous suppositions that the rite could be attributed chronologically to the initial phase of the Early Bronze Age only (formative phase of Polada by R. Perini⁹) (Perini 1990, p. 234; Nicolis 2005, p. 528).

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8. E.g. Remedello Sotto (Brescia) (De Marinis 1998), Aosta Saint-Martin-de-Corléans (Mezzena 1997; Mezzena 1998), Ossimo Pat (Bergamo) (Poggiani Keller 2002; Poggiani Keller 2006), Gardolo di Mezzo (Trento) (Mottes *et al.*, this volume).

9. See Perini 2001, p. 288-293.

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THE BRONZE AGE TUMULI OF GARDOLO DI MEZZO (TRENTO, ITALY) IN THE ADIGE VALLEY

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ABSTRACT

The site of Gardolo di Mezzo (350m a.s.l.) is situated in the central eastern area of the southern region of the Alps, along the left-hand side of the Adige Valley.

Preventive archaeological surveys, carried out by the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici of the Provincia autonoma of Trento, brought to light an extensive archaeological area. The site has provided traces of a settlement and two tumuli have been found nearby, with a complex stratigraphic sequence in which colluvial layers alternate with anthropic structures. The more ancient levels of one of these platforms have brought to light a subcircular burial mound with a subrectangular enclosure covered by pebbles. The anthropological studies carried out on skeletal remains found inside the structure showed the presence of a buried individual of about 5 years $\pm$ 16 months of age. Inside the enclosure there were also 15 pieces of slag and a ceramic jug which can be dated to the Early Bronze Age.

The area was occupied from the Early to the Late Bronze Age but the chronology of the founding of the structures may be further anticipated as more research is carried out. The presence of many fragments of coarse slag and several grinding stones across the entire area suggests intense activities in copper smelting during the various phases of occupation. This fact is probably connected to the exploitation, during the Bronze Age, of the ore sources of the Monte Calisio nearby, a well-known mining area in the Middle Ages.

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The site of Gardolo di Mezzo (350 metres a.s.l.) is located in the central eastern part of the southern region of the Alps, on the left-hand side of the Adige Valley, about 5km north of the town of Trento (*fig. 1*). The archaeological area is located on a terrace 150m above the present-day valley floor and naturally protected to the north and south by ravines formed by two watercourses.

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The site stretches out over the bottom of a slight morphological depression with a NW-SE orientation, delimited to the east by the western slopes of the Doss de la Luna (415.5m a.s.l.).



Fig. 1 – Site location map.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Up to August 2003 Gardolo di Mezzo was not known to have any areas of archaeological interest. However, preventive archaeological surveys carried out during digging work for the division of the area into building lots, carried out by the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici of the Provincia autonoma di Trento, brought to light an extensive archaeological area.¹

To date five sectors have been investigated (referred to as GARM 1-5) (*fig. 2*). In four of these the archaeological investigations have already been completed, whereas in the sector known as GARM 2, the excavation of a burial area and a cult place, with two separate tumuli, is still underway (*fig. 3*).

The GARM 1 and 3 sectors, situated on the western slopes of the Doss de la Luna, have on the other hand provided traces of several settlement layers stretching out over an area of about 3000 sq. m. In this

1. The archaeological investigation is led by Elisabetta Mottes of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici of Trento and conducted in the field by Michele Bassetti of the Cora Ricerche Archeologiche company of Trento.

The scientific study of the rich archive of natural and archaeological data provided by the Gardolo di Mezzo deposit is coordinated, as far as geoarchaeological aspects are concerned, by Michele Bassetti and the archaeological aspects are followed by Elisabetta Mottes. The research team is currently composed of Elena Silvestri (a collaborator with the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici) for the cataloguing and study of archaeological material; Alessandra Mazzucchi (of the Laboratorio di Antropologia e Odontologia Forense of the University of Milan and the Osteoarch Lab) for anthropological analyses; Alessandra Spinetti, Alex Fontana and Daniela Marrazzo (of Osteoarch Lab) for archaeozoological analyses; Paola Crepaldi and Letizia Nicoloso (of the Istituto di Zootechnia Generale, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Milan) for antique DNA analysis of animal remains; Mauro Rottoli (Laboratorio di Archeobiologia of the Musei Civici of Como) for archaeobotanical analyses; Andreas Hauptmann (Deutsches Bergbau-Museum Bochum) for archaeometallurgical analyses; Pieter M. Grootes (Leibniz Labor für Altersbestimmung und Isotopenforschung of the Christian-Albrechts-Universität of Kiel) for radiocarbon datings.

Preliminary archaeological research was integrated with a series of geophysical investigations carried out by the Laboratorio Geotecnico of the Servizio Geologico of the Province of Trento.

A digital model of the mounds brought to light has been realized using 3D laser technology, with the collaboration of the staff of the Fondazione Bruno Kessler of Povo (Trento).

Figures and photographs have been processed and designed by Michele Bassetti, Veronica Barbetti and Luca Scoz (Cora Ricerche Archeologiche s.n.c., Trento). English translation by Vivienne Frankell.

area the excavations carried out to date by the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici have been concerned with a surface area of just 200 sq. m, along the south easterly edge of the settlement (fig. 2).

On the basis of the stratigraphic sequence identified and the archaeological material found, it can be estimated that the settlement was populated for almost the whole of the 2nd millennium B.C. according to calibrated chronology, from the Early to the Late Bronze Age.

This is the most important Bronze Age settlement discovered in Trentino in a “dry” area, considering the exceptional evidence provided in wetland areas by the Ledro and Fiaavè Carera lake-dwellings (Rageth 1974; Perini 1984; Perini 1987; Perini 1994; Perini 2001; Marzatico 1990; Marzatico 1997a; Brochier *et al.* 1991; Brochier *et al.* 1993).

In the sector known as GARM 5 (fig. 2), to the north of the settlement and cult area, major reclamation work was already carried out in the early phases of the Bronze Age, with the aim of making the Gardolo di Mezzo terrace inhabitable, which suggests that there was a strictly rational organization of the space available in order to plan the whole area.



Fig. 2 – Trento, Gardolo di Mezzo. Excavation's sectors (Garm 1-5).



Fig. 3 – Trento, Gardolo di Mezzo. View of the Late Bronze Age tumuli 1 and 2.

STRATIGRAPHIC SEQUENCE AND CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES FOR THE TUMULI

The geoarchaeological surveys carried out in the five different sectors have made it possible to identify the evolution of the stratigraphic deposits, in the context of which the following main events can be noted:

- the bedrock was covered with sand and gravel deposits linked to glacial melting following the Last Glacial Maximum;
- with climatic improvement during the Holocene, a forest soil, indicating substantial stabilization of the slopes, evolved above the sand and gravel deposits;
- before extensive adaptation of the environment by man, which on the basis of the data currently available started at the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C. according to calibrated chronology, a phase of hydrogeological instability began, which was to continue up to the Middle Ages. The slopes were furrowed by deep erosion and the morphological depression, which would have been chosen as the cult area, was gradually covered by thick colluvial deposits;
- to the north of the settlement and cult area, extensive reclamation work and management of the slopes were already carried out in the early phases of the Bronze Age, designed to contain the flow of sediment towards the valley;
- after the establishment of the cult area, the progressive colluvial deposits gradually buried the tumuli and led to repeated reconstruction of the floor surfaces and the raising of the structures in order to avoid them being completely obliterated.

In the GARM 2 sector, where the tumuli were found, a cyclical stratigraphic sequence with a depth of around 4.5 metres has been found, in the context of which colluvial layers alternate with anthropic structures (*fig. 4*).

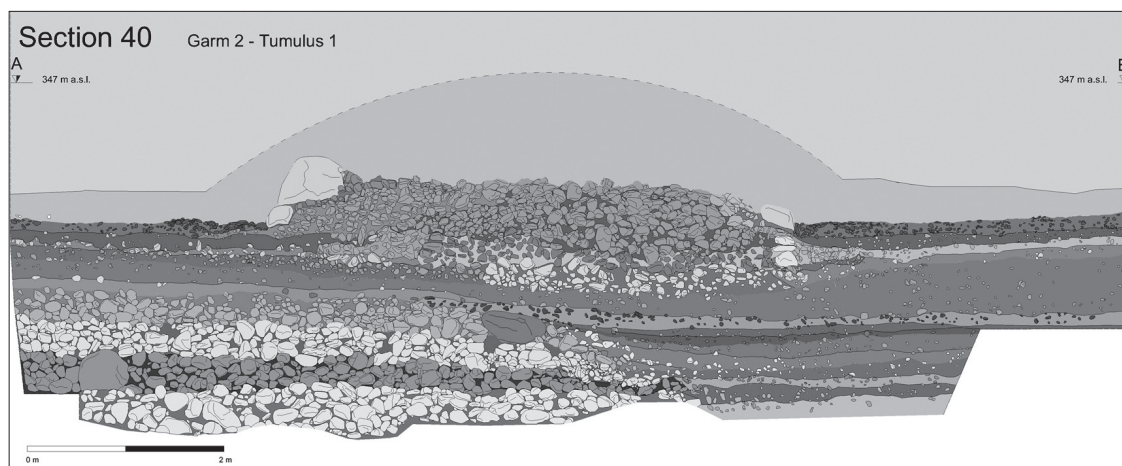


Fig. 4 – Trento, Gardolo di Mezzo (sector Garm 2, tumulus 1). Section 40.

The renovation of the tumuli involved a series of activities by man over time, which can be summarized as follows:

- ploughing of the colluvial sediments previously deposited in the area surrounding the ancient structure;²
- laying of pebbles on the reworked ground along the band surrounding the platform;

2. As regards the subject of ploughing, an experimental study based on statistical handling of modifications in the fabric of the clasts before and after ploughing has been started. This has already provided important clues for interpretation which are not possible to deal with on this occasion for reasons of space (cf. Bassetti *et al.* forthcoming).

- establishment of a platform and a perimeter structure made of clasts and sub-rounded blocks taken from the fluvio-glacial substratum on site;
- creation of an earth covering, of which limited remaining seams have been found.

In general the deterioration of the earth covering following the depositing of sediments led to percolation of the matrix into the spaces between clasts. In one case two episodes of earth covering with an interval marked by the lighting of fires on the platform were recognized.

THE STRATIGRAPHIC AND CULTURAL EVOLUTION OF TUMULUS 1

The structure known as tumulus 1 is currently the area which has been most carefully investigated.

Diachronic superimposition of the numerous phases of reconstruction and renovation gave the structure a different shape, size and orientation over the course of time.

There is clear evidence of copper slag fragments and grinding stones in every phase, whereas there are very few other archaeological findings.

It should also be specified that the archaeological investigations in the area of tumulus 1 have not yet reached the sterile substratum, so it is likely that the chronology for the founding of the structure may be further anticipated.

The main evolutionary phases of tumulus 1 are as follows.

The most ancient levels currently documented show the presence of a platform oriented NW-SE, which has been investigated over an area 7.3m x 2m, which saw several phases of restructuring (*fig. 6*). The archaeological materials show that the area was frequented from Early Bronze Age I up to Early Bronze Age II, according to the chronology drawn up by R.C. de Marinis for the Lake Garda area, which covers the chronological period between 2077 and 1637 B.C. on the basis of dendrochronological dating available for certain lake-dwelling sites (de Marinis 2000 p. 98-126; de Marinis 2002).

The most ancient levels of this platform have brought to light a subcircular burial mound with stone covering which covered a subrectangular enclosure (*fig. 5*). The anthropological studies carried out on skeletal remains found inside the structure showed the presence of a buried individual, aged around 5 years $\pm$ 16 months. The material is fragmentary although there are bone elements belonging to the entire skeleton.³ Inside the enclosure, along with 15 pieces of slag, a small truncated cone jug with handles and vertical decoration under the rim was also brought to light. It is currently being restored and can be dated to the Early Bronze Age (de Marinis 2002, p. 25-38).

In later phases the platform was extended with a small internal cell containing a bovine skull (*fig. 7*). In a carefully structured recess to the side of the platform the tomb of an adult canine determined to be of the genus *Vulpes Vulpes* was found, with an incomplete skeleton anatomically unarticulated. Initial interpretation of skeletal remains does not give any indication of the cause of death of the animal (Spinetti 2009; Spinetti *et al.* forthcoming).

There is evidence of the lighting of fires at the top of the platform in every period.

Furthermore, there is also documentation supporting the presence of charred botanical remains and fauna belonging to species of bovine (*Bos taurus*), sheep and goats (*Ovis aries/Capra hircus*) and pigs (*Sus domesticus*) (Spinetti 2009; Spinetti *et al.* forthcoming).

Above this evidence a new platform was established, oriented N-S, for which some phases of renovation are documented (*fig. 8*). This structure is around 80cm high and has been investigated over an area 7.6m x 4.1m. Stones were positioned along the main axes, probably used as signs. The pottery material found in these phases can generally be dated to the early stages of the Middle Bronze Age.

3. The anthropological analysis was carried out by Alessandra Mazzucchi (Laboratorio di Antropologia e Odontologia Forense of the University of Milan and Osteoarch Lab).

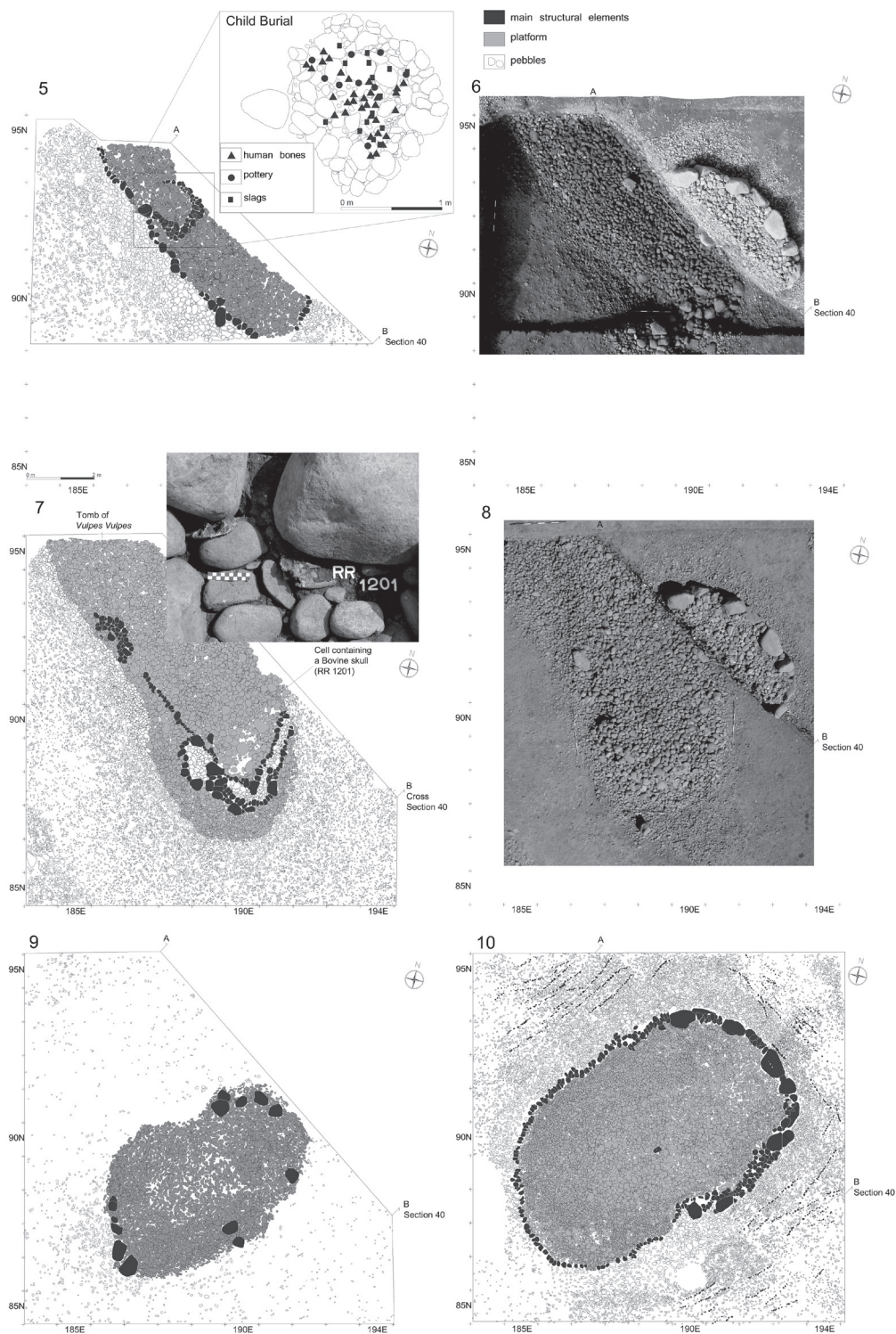


Fig. 5 – Trento, Gardolo di Mezzo (sector Garm 2, tumulus 1). Platform with child burial (Early Bronze Age).

Fig. 6 – Trento, Gardolo di Mezzo (sector Garm 2, tumulus 1). Platform covering the child burial (Early Bronze Age). On the right is visible a part of a megalithic structure which was raised on the north eastern side of the tumulus 1 in the Late Bronze Age (cf. fig. 10).

Fig. 7 – Trento, Gardolo di Mezzo (sector Garm 2, tumulus 1). Platform with a small internal cell containing a bovine skull. To the west side of the platform the tomb of an adult canine (*Vulpes Vulpes*) was found (Early Bronze Age).

Fig. 8 – Trento, Gardolo di Mezzo (sector Garm 2, tumulus 1). Platform oriented N-S dating to the early phase of the Middle Bronze Age.

Fig. 9 – Trento, Gardolo di Mezzo (sector Garm 2, tumulus 1). Elliptical platform dating to Late Bronze Age.

Fig. 10 – Trento, Gardolo di Mezzo (sector Garm 2, tumulus 1). Platform with a megalithic monument on the north eastern side of the structure (Late Bronze Age).

After the deposition of substantial colluvial sediment, an elongated platform was built, oriented NE-SW, which was subjected to several phases of renovation. From an initial elliptical platform with a major axis of 7m and a minor axis of 4.5m (*fig. 9*), the structure was then progressively extended until the major axis reached 10.9m and the minor axis 8.4m and an estimated height of more than 2m (*fig. 10*).

During one of the phases of renovation, a megalithic monument was raised on the north eastern side of the structure (*fig. 6, 8, 10*)

The archaeological material found allows these phases of renovation to be attributed to the final phases of the Middle Bronze Age and to the Late Bronze Age.

It would also seem possible to attribute the structure known as tumulus 2 to the same chronological horizon. This was only partially excavated in 2007 and was found to be exceptionally well preserved (*fig. 3*). Only the top of the tumulus has not been conserved as it was levelled off in Late Antiquity/Early Middle Ages in order to create an agricultural area.

During the course of the Late Bronze Age, a rectangular pit, which has been investigated to a depth of 5m but not yet completely excavated, was dug between the two tumuli, subsequently filled with pebbles (*fig. 3*).

CONCLUSIONS

Considering that excavations of the cult area are still underway, that two thirds of the surface area has yet to be investigated, that the study of archaeological material and specialist analyses are at a preliminary stage and that we are awaiting the radiocarbon dating underway at Leibniz Labor of Kiel (Germany), we will nevertheless make some preliminary considerations:

- the tumuli discovered at Gardolo di Mezzo document the presence of this type of structure in the southern area of the Alps for the first time;⁴
- the evolution of the tumuli at Gardolo di Mezzo was heavily conditioned by the geomorphological context of the site. The tumuli were constructed within a slight valley depression which has been subject to the constant depositing of colluvial materials which determined the gradual burial of the structures and consequently their repeated reconstruction over the years;
- the stratigraphic and cultural data show that there was a cult area which was frequented for around 800 years. Its main role was probably as a burial site, remaining active throughout the centuries, the place of cult gradually being transformed into a “place of recollection” perhaps dedicated to the cult of ancestors;
- the tumuli at Gardolo di Mezzo were connected with the settlement situated close by;
- the presence of abundant coarse slags in the area of the settlement, the tumuli and the neighbouring areas suggests intense activities for copper smelting in the various phases of settlement.

These data are particularly significant given that until the discovery of the Gardolo di Mezzo site, evidence of metalworking activities in Trentino was concentrated in two distinct geographical and chronological contexts: on the floor of the Adige valley during the end of the Copper Age/beginning of the Bronze Age and on mountain areas above an altitude of 1000m, in particular in eastern Trentino, during the Late and Final Bronze Age (Preuschen 1973; Šebesta 1992; Perini 1989; Perini 1992; Cierny 2008; Marzatico 1997b; Cierny *et al.* 1995; Cierny *et al.* 1998; Artioli *et al.* 2003; Bellintani *et al.* 2010), leaving a substantial chronological gap, during which there was no known evidence regarding copper smelting.

4. In Northern Italy, as far as the Bronze Age is concerned, tumuli containing single burials are known almost exclusively from the upland plains of the Friuli region and find analogies with those found in Istria and Dalmatia (Cassola Guida, Corazza 2003; Nicolis 2004, p. 117-118; de Marinis 2005, p. 63-64; Canci *et al.* 2005; Borgna, Corazza 2007; Borgna, Cassola Guida 2007). In Trentino the tumulus found at Calferi di Stenico in the Giudicarie Valley is known, which has been dated to the final stages of the Middle Bronze Age (Fiavè 6 by R. Perini) and contains six tombs probably belonging to a single family group, which has only been partly investigated at the end of the 1970s (Perini *et al.* 1991; Perini 2001, p. 324-326; Nicolis 2001, p. 358; Nicolis 2004, p. 139).

It is therefore possible to surmise that one of the reasons behind the choice of human groups to settle on the Gardolo di Mezzo terrace during the Bronze Age was the exploitation of the ore sources found on the Monte Calisio tableland, a well-known mining area in the Middle Ages (Brigo, Tizzoni 1997). The geographical location of the site, in a strategic position on the eastern slopes of the Adige Valley, a major communications route which represented a natural thoroughfare and cultural link between Central Europe and the Italian peninsula throughout prehistory and protohistory, should also be underlined (Mottes *et al.* 2002; Marzatico 2002; Bellintani 2002; Bellintani forthcoming; Artursson, Nicolis 2007; Borrello *et al.* 2009).

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YAMNAYA GROUPS AND TUMULI WEST OF THE BLACK SEA

Volker HEYD*

ABSTRACT

Ten thousand round tumuli characterize the plains around the lower Danube, its tributaries and the central Carpathian basin. The very origin of their erection goes often back to the 4th and the 3rd millennium B.C. About 500 excavated tumuli from the present countries of Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary testify to their constructors: populations of the “Yamnaya Culture”, known also under the terms “Pit Grave Culture” or “Ochre Grave Culture”. Typical are primary single graves in rectangular pits dug into the underground before the erection of the tumuli, and secondary single graves in the tumulus filling often accompanied by a further tumulus heightening. The position of the body is either supine with flexed legs or a crouched position on the side; in any case, usually orientated in a west-east direction. Intensive strewing of ochre powder, textiles, furs and mats for the pit walls and floors, and wooden beams to cover it, are further characteristics, along with a general lack of accompanying grave gifts.

The originally north eastern Pontic Yamnaya-complex has for a long time been invoked as the key example of a large-scale migration in later prehistory, flooding foreign people over Eastern and Central eastern Europe (M. Gimbutas' third wave, *e.g.* Gimbutas 1981). However, more sophisticated approaches in recent research have shown its confinement only to the familiar steppe environments of the plains, and its capacity for long-distance social contacts back to the Pontic steppe zone, leading D. Anthony (1997), for example, to see a “circular migration” at work. Nevertheless, the tumuli and their burials testify to immigration.

It is still unclear whether their economy was entirely pastoral or not. However, burial evidence of ox-drawn wagons (such as Placidol in Bulgaria), as well as, in neighbouring contemporary archaeological cultures, the further impact of domesticated horses, a new preference for cattle herds, and changes to the form and quantity of spindle whorls (“woolly sheep”) could point towards this direction. Recently begun isotope projects on their mobility pattern ($^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$; $\delta^{18}\text{O}$) and diet ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$; $\delta^{15}\text{N}$) will validate this model. However, there is a deeper and considerably more geographically extended impact on the ideology, social structure, technology and material culture, which recently led us to create a “Yamnaya Package”, changing the shape of Europe in a wider transformation horizon (Harrison, Heyd 2007).

Ten thousand round tumuli characterize the plains around the lower Danube and its tributaries, and in the central Carpathian basin. The very origin of their erection here often goes back to the 4th and the 3rd millennium cal. B.C. About 500 excavated tumuli and more than a thousand graves from the modern day European countries of Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary testify to their constructors: populations of the “Yamnaya”, known also under the terms of “Yamna Culture”, “Pit Grave Culture” or “Ochre Grave Culture”.

About 45 sites with 60 excavated tumuli are known from Hungary, ranging from a single excavated tumulus on a site, as occurs in most cases, up to the 11 tumuli excavated out of 33 counted at the Kétegyháza site. They have delivered altogether *ca.* 70 burials which can be attributed to the Yamnaya. From Serbia, there are about 12 tumuli sites known, depending on the definition and secure attribution of Yamnaya tumuli and burials.

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Circa 100 excavated tumuli can be added from Romania. During the Udine conference, S. Alexandrov (Sofia) explained that exactly 277 Bronze Age barrows have been excavated in Bulgaria alone (see Alexandrov, this volume). However, the great majority of these remain unpublished, which makes it very difficult to assess their significance, value and attribution.

The originally northeast-Pontic Yamnaya complex has for a long time been called upon as the primary example of a large-scale migration in later prehistory, foreign people flooding over East and East Central Europe. One can perfectly imagine why their seemingly sudden appearance between the Black Sea and the Tisza in an area several hundred kilometres in extent, as well as between the Prut and the Maritza rivers in the lowlands of Southeast Europe, has led some scholars to develop a model of steppe invasion (“semi-nomadic horse riding Kurgan people from the east”), of which Marija Gimbutas’ hypothesis is the epitome in its most extreme form (*e.g.* 1973; 1977; 1980; 1981), and see a Kurgan culture at work. This should consequently have changed the face of prehistoric Europe. However, more sophisticated approaches in recent research have altered our views. They are now dominated by different terms like circular migration, wagon dwellers, Yamnaya package, and ideology (Anthony 2007; Harrison, Heyd 2007). Nevertheless, the tumuli and their burials testify to immigration.

To date, there is not existing a single account, article or book bringing together, analysing and evaluating, by the standards of modern prehistoric study, all Yamnaya tumuli and burials west of the Black Sea. Even within the four different countries, one can rarely find an overview based on the country’s current record of Yamnaya tumuli and burials written less than 15 years ago. One is, therefore, very much dependent on regional accounts such as F. Burtănescu’s book (2002), or the modern publications of single tumuli such as that by Dani and Nepper (2006); or relies on the many articles of E. Comşa for Romania (*e.g.* 1998 as one of the latest); I. Panayotov’s book (1989) for Bulgaria; Bukvić’s, Girić’s and Medović’s accounts for Serbia, all published in 1987 on the occasion of the Donji Milanovac Symposium of 1985 (Srejšović, Tasić 1987); or, in particular, I. Ecsedy’s excellent account in a monograph format on the Hungarian Yamnaya. But this is from 1979, written more than 30 years ago.

DISTRIBUTION

It is one of the characteristic features that those tumuli and burials attributed without doubt to this Western Yamnaya branch are restricted to the Southeast European lowlands which exhibit to this day steppe or steppe-like vegetation and environment (*fig. 1*). Without stretching the evidence too much, it is quite likely that grass and bush-land were the principal environment condition here some 5000 years ago (Barczy *et al.* 2006). In the wider context, this area can be seen as the westernmost part of the vast steppe ecosystem of Eurasia, stretching on the other side as far as the borders of China. This steppe belt is characterized by a continental climate with larger differences between hot summer and cold and windy winter, and day and night, as well as a generally low annual rainfall, with a substantial lack of water in the summers especially. It accommodates fine Loess and Chernozem soils but also frequently sand dunes, and monotone grass, shrubs, and bushy vegetation, with wooded stripes only along the river systems.

West of the Black Sea, this is particularly true of the Dobrudja, the region east of the lower Danube bend and south of its delta, stretching also into the slightly hilly but seasonally dry areas of northeast Bulgaria around Dobrich. It is exactly in these places that we can find the first larger concentration of typical Yamnaya tumuli and burials (Irimia 2003; Vassiliu 2004; Panayotov 1989; Krauss 2006). The second larger concentration follows the plains and the lower terraces on both sides of the lower Danube (Schuster 2004). On the southeast Romanian side, we see here the dry Bărăgan plain as a part of the great Wallachian plain, with its regions of Muntenia and, towards the west, Oltenia, leading to the Iron Gate. The Ialomița, Argeș and Olt are the most prominent rivers here. This distribution continues, to a minor extent, on the southern side of the Danube, into present day north and northwest Bulgaria (Panayotov 1989; Kitov *et al.* 1991; Krauss 2006). On this side, a concentration of Yamnaya tumuli and burials is known in the modern districts of Pleven, Lovech, and Vratsa. Another region, which exhibits the same geomorphological and environmental conditions, is the Upper Thracian plain in Bulgaria, between the Balkan and Rhodope



Fig. 1 – Distribution of the western Yamnaya tumuli (ca. 2950-2500 cal. B.C.) in the present European countries of Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary. The list is mainly based on the accounts of Ecsedy 1979; Srejović, Tasić 1987; Panayotov 1989; Kitov et al. 1991; Ivanova Gaydarska 2007; Burtănescu 1998; Comşa 1998; Vasiliu 2004; and various other authors (please note that a detailed list of all graves will be published elsewhere due to the limited space available here).

mountains (Lichardus, Lichardus-Itten 2003; Leshtakov 2002 [2006]). The climate here, however, is more influenced by the Mediterranean. This region is also known for its many tumuli, in particular in the area framed by the Maritza and Tundza rivers in the modern oblast districts of Stara Zagora, Sliven, and Yambol, and we can regard it as the third region offering evidence for the Western Yamnaya. Although tumuli are widespread, archaeological excavations are mainly concentrated around the Maritza-Istok open-air mining area, in the river catchments of the Ovcharitsa, Sazlijka and Sokolitza, tributaries of the Maritza.

Leaving the lower Danube, but still remaining in Romania, a fourth region with attested Yamnaya tumuli and burials lies in the Romanian district of Moldavia. Here, a distinct concentration can be found in the well-drained hill and flatlands between the rivers Prut and Siret, tributaries of the lower Danube. Many tumuli and burials are known and published (Dinu 1974; Comşa 1987; Burtănescu 1998; Burtănescu 2002) from this region backing onto the eastern Carpathians. They form part of a much wider Yamnaya distribution region further to the east and northeast into the current State of Moldavia (*e.g.* Dergačev 1998; Dergačev 2002), where their numbers increase gradually, and from here on over the Dnestr river into modern Ukraine and the north-Pontic steppes. Tumulus occupation patterns and aspects of burial customs show the closer affiliation of this Prut and Siret group to the Dnestr variety of the Yamnaya.

The fifth and westernmost distribution area, following the Dobrudja and the lower Danube in larger Yamnaya representations, lies in the central Carpathian basin; a grassland plain covering 50,000 sq. km in Hungary alone (Kalicz 1968; Ecsedy 1979; Patay 1987; Kalicz 1998; Dani, Nepper 2006). It is framed by the Danube to the south and the Tisza river to the west, covering the current European countries of Hungary, Serbia and Romania (in form of the west Transylvanian Crişana and Banat regions). These lowlands, of which the famous Puszta is said to be the core area, are drained by the river systems of the Criş/Körös and the Mureş/Maros, tributaries of the Tisza. It is also called the Great Alföld, and the historical landscape of the Vojvodina is a southern part of it. In this region, Yamnaya tumuli and burials are spread all over with the largest concentration of them located more in the north, mostly in the current Hungarian counties (Comitats) of Szabolcs-Szatmár, Hajdú-Bihar, and Békés. P. Patay (1987) described the further distribution of tumuli, on the one hand, with only a small number further to the north, the Nyírség; on the other hand, more tumuli are known northwest and west of the central Tisza, as well as just west of the Tisza mouth (Falkenstein 1998, fig. 232). But none of those to the west of the Tisza could ever be securely attributed to the Yamnaya (also not Szentistvánbaksa and Monaj, named by Patay 1987, p. 89). The only exception so far is in Mezöcsát-Hörösögös (Kalicz 1989; Kalicz 1998; Kalicz 1999), a tumulus just next to the middle Tisza, erected over a Baden-period flat cemetery. Here grave 3 is clearly (and grave 4 perhaps) displaying Yamnaya characteristics (see below). The same situation accounts for the Srem region of Serbia, the area on the western Danube side, in between the Danube and the mouth of the Sava river. At least two tumuli (at the sites of Batajnica and Vojka: Tasić 1959; Tasić 1995b) have been excavated here, but their urned cremations in Vučedol vessels shall not be attributed here to the Yamnaya (also see below). So, one can assume that in the Carpathian basin there are clear borders with the Danube in the south and the Tisza river in the west.

Yamnaya may have entered the Carpathian basin via the Iron Gate or, more likely, by using the gorges in the nearby valleys. The concentration of tumuli and Yamnaya burials in Romanian Oltenia (Schuster 2004) around the bow of the Danube next to the town of Calafat (southwest of Craiova) may speak in favour of such. However there remains the possibility of another route, via Romanian Moldavia over the east Carpathian passes into the upper Tisza basin. Incidentally, this was the route the Mongols would take some 4000 years later (Chambers 1979).

Outside these five main distribution zones, or Western Yamnaya groups, there is only one other region with a relatively secure attribution, and three possible tumuli displaying Yamnaya traits: central Transylvania, in the current Romanian districts of Cluj and Mureş. Here, the earthen barrow of Câmpia Turzii (Cluj) is, following the description of the burial customs (Ciugudean 1995), without doubt a Yamnaya burial. Perhaps the cases of Cipău and Răscruci can also be seen in this relation. However some doubt remains, due to the scantiness of the information, so that one should be cautious in accepting Transylvania as the sixth Western Yamnaya region. Besides, there is the likelihood that some other regions immediately west of the Pontus, which have not yet delivered Yamnaya tumuli and their characteristic burials, may also be counted as such: a *ca.* 60km wide stripe along the Black Sea shores of Bulgaria, going down southwards towards the Strandza mountains; crossing these middle-range mountains one then reaches the catchment system of the Ergene river

in east Thrace, modern Turkey, which still exhibits today, although partly wooded, a steppe-like slightly hilly environment; finally, it is northeast Greece south of the Rhodopes mountains, also called west Thrace, where we see a similar environment and landscape. In all these regions, we do not yet have a characteristic Yamnaya tumulus and burial, often due to missing archaeological investigations, but there is still the possibility that one might come along if only proper research would begin.

More puzzling, however, as potential Yamnaya settling and wandering areas are three other regions in Europe: the 8000 sq. km wide Little Hungarian Plain, called the Little Alföld or Kisalföld; the north/north-central Middle Elbe-Saale area of east Germany with its fine Chernozem soils of the here Magdeburger Börde and further steppe vegetation in the shadow of the Harz mountains; and a stripe in the foreland along the east Carpathians in southeast Poland, the current border region between Romania, the Ukraine, and Poland. For all these three regions we do not have “a smoking gun” in the prehistoric record of the first half of the 3rd millennium cal. B.C. pointing towards Yamnaya tumuli and burials. What we have instead, however, are indirect hints, such as the concentration of tumuli (see below), elements of Yamnaya burial customs, anthropomorphic statue-stelae, and artefacts with eastern links or eastern origins.

CHARACTERISTICS

A definition of the Western Yamnaya can only be formulated on the basis of burials and their burial customs; and when making an overview of a decade-long discussion on the attributes on which burials belong to Yamnaya or not, one must be very strict in this definition. Settlements, of any kind, are unknown, and there are only a few hoards existing from the first half of the 3rd millennium cal. B.C. on the margins of the Western Yamnaya distribution area. Their cultural attribution, either to the Yamnaya or to a local archaeological culture, remains another disputed and, to a certain extent, unanswered question.

Typical of the Western Yamnaya (see generally: Burtănescu 1998; Comşa 1998; Panayotov 1989; Jovanović 1990; Ecsedy 1979) is inhumation, either as primary individual graves in rectangular or oval pits dug into the ground before the erection of the round earthen tumuli, or secondary single graves in the tumulus filling, often accompanied with a further tumulus heightening. Tumuli can thus become quite large, with diameters often more than 40m and heights well over 3-4m, and, in the west, can contain up to 30 graves. However, this does not mean that each burial in such a tumulus automatically belongs to the Yamnaya. Later intrusions are quite possible, as it is possible that typical Yamnaya burials are brought into tumuli of the 4th millennium cal. B.C. In any case, several tumuli of this kind can then be arranged in groups or linear alignments; but isolated tumuli are also often recorded.

The position of the body in the grave pit is typically supine with flexed legs – the great majority of all securely attributed graves show this characteristic; less frequent is the crouched position on the side. I regard the supine position with extended legs as an indicator for a non-Yamnaya attribution here in the west. The same accounts for a few cases of cremations published as Yamnaya. Flexed legs are often still upright, even after thousands of years in the graves, but may have also fallen to one side due to decomposition of the body tissues. Also, the so-called frog-position of the legs might be due to this process of decay. In any case, this gives evidence for the original chamber in which the body had been deposited. Furthermore, I think this *domus*-idea (cf. Hodder 1990), for which such a burial chamber stands, is a key component in the whole conception of Yamnaya burials. The main orientation of both the pits and skeletons is in the east-west direction, with the heads usually in the west. But other directions are also attested. A gender differentiated burial custom with different grave positions and orientation has never been proved for the Yamnaya. However, the majority of analyzed skeletons belong interestingly to adult males, and their percentage is even higher in the case of the primary graves, over which the first tumuli are then erected. So, Yamnaya was, to judge from burials, very much a *masculine* society. Intensive straying of ochre powder in the whole chamber, or on and around the body of the dead, though often only on some parts of the body or distinct places next to the body, is another characteristic for their burials, hence the name “ochre-graves”. This can also include the deposition of lumps of ochre in the graves, a custom typical of the Carpathian basin. One

could add that, in this region, on average fewer secondary burials were cut into existing tumuli. Such minor differences can be helpful when trying to distinguish and define the Yamnaya of the Carpathian basin from their compatriots around the lower Danube and Moldavia. The next distinct feature is the application of reed mats, textiles, leather, and even furs, for the pit walls and floors, and these have even been documented outside the grave pit. There are also mentions of felt and carpets, although evidence for them in the record is rather scanty. More frequently observed, however, are patterns and colourful decorations, often combining two or more different colours (Kalicz 1968, p. 35; Ecsedy 1979). It is likely, that these colourful decorations are playing a distinct role in Yamnaya society, and there is the secondary importance of colour combinations and pattern as emblematic and symbolic signs based on associations. The burial chambers prepared in this way are then covered with wooden beams, planks, or logs; in a few cases in Bulgaria and Romania big stone slabs covering the grave pit are also recorded. All this speaks again in favour of the importance of the *domus*-idea, as do additional wooden posts, stone frames and, most of all, fireplaces or hearths, attached to graves and burials in numerous examples. We also have evidence of secondary disturbances of the graves and burials, most likely in the sense of grave robbery or looting.

All graves are normally only poorly furnished and the general lack of accompanying grave gifts can also be seen as a further characteristic trait. This distinguishes the Yamnaya west of the Black Sea from their north-Pontic relatives who seem to have been slightly more equipped on average (cf. Ivanova 2003). If one wants, there is only one exception for the whole of the Western Yamnaya: the only known wagon burial from Placidol I, tum. 12, grave 1 in Bulgaria (Panayotov 1989). Otherwise weaponry and tools are almost always absent. Exceptions are found only in the Goran-Slatina necropolis: a bronze chisel in tum. 3, grave 8, a stone axe in tum. 3, grave 2; and arrow heads in tum. 4, grave 1 and tum. 9, grave 2. This makes it obvious that social expression in Western Yamnaya is not manifested in grave goods, but firstly in labour and communal exertion to erect a tumulus, and, secondarily, in efforts to create a burial chamber, the new house of the dead. The most frequently occurring category of equipment, known from almost 40 graves in the west, are little temple or hair rings, or spirals, occasionally made of copper, however mostly of silver, and more rarely of electrum and gold (Motzoi-Chicideanu, Olteanu 2001; Ruttkay 2002; Ruttkay 2003). Their distribution covers all regions of the Western Yamnaya. Other equipment belongs mainly to the adornment category, and consists almost exclusively of necklaces and chains of beads or perforated teeth. Beads have different shapes, and can be made of gold, silver (22 specimen at Goran-Slatina, tum. 3, grave 7; and 14 beads at Mednikarovo-Iskritsa, tum. 4, primary grave 1), copper, limestone, bone, shell, and teeth. Ecsedy (1979, p. 17) mentions a “row of beads” made of 43 animal (dog) teeth pierced through the root from grave 7 of the Kétegyháza-Törökhalom (= tum. 3). Further on, flints are occasionally given. They represent a rather unspecific simple flake inventory; three sheep astragals originate from the same grave which contained the teeth chain, and many more have been found in a neighbouring tumulus (3b). A grinding stone is recorded from Sárretudvari-Örhalom, grave 10, however this grave is doubtful in its attribution.

Pottery is always rare. In the case of ceramics, we are dealing with two different groups: on the one hand, pottery vessels of neighbouring archaeological cultures which were included in the burials which are said to be Yamnaya. This seems to be a general pattern all over the Western Yamnaya distribution as shown for typical Coțofeni III vessels in the cases of Tarnava, tum. 1 and Goran-Slatina, tum. 2, grave 4 in northwest Bulgaria; for Ezero B-vessels in Mednikarovo-Iskritsa, tum. 3, grave 2 and tum. 1, grave 2 in the Thracian plain (Bulgaria); for Foltești and Cernavodă II-vessels in Bolotești, tum. 2, graves 7, 10 and 12, and Vânători (Movila lui Nicolău Tocu), grave 11, all Moldavia (Romania); for Glina or Vučedol-like vessels in Verbița (Romania) and Harlech (Bulgaria); or for the vessels in the Sárretudvari-Örhalom graves nos. 4, 7/7a, 9 and 11 in Hungary with affinities to the Makó and the Livezile group.¹ It should be clear that these customs make the attribution to the Yamnaya very difficult, and their implications will be discussed in more detail below in the chapter on “attribution”. On the other hand, we know of a few vessels, which seem to be originally Yamnaya in their making due to design and decoration (Kalicz 1968; Roman *et al.* 1992;

1. This pattern extends further to the east and northeast if one takes into consideration the pottery vessels and typical flint axes of the Globular Amphora culture found in Yamnaya graves in the catchment areas of the Dnepr and middle Dnepr rivers: see Szmyt 2003, p. 414.

Bertemes 1998). Interestingly, among these are classical beakers or, more precisely, beaker-like vessels, such as from Buj and Tiszabólna-Szilpuszta in Hungary; Gurbănești, tum. 2, graves 3 and 4; Miloștea, tum. 3;² Ploiești-Triaj, tum. 2/1943, graves 15 and 20; and Slobozia-Hănești, tum. 1, grave 3, all in Romania; or Goran-Slatina, tum. 3, grave 3; Tarnava, tum. 2, grave 1; and Madara, tum. 3, grave 4 in Bulgaria. But, there are also other forms, such as the little amphora from Srbski Krstur, and a pot-like vessel from Independența-Murighiol, grave 4. Further on, rim and inside decorated (cross-)footed bowls are known from the graves of Corlăteni-Dealul Cetății and Grivița-Galați, barrow 2 in Moldavia in Romania (Schuster 1995), as well as a single find from Nagyhalász-Királyhalom in Hungary, likely also coming from a tumulus and grave (Kalicz 1968, tab. I, 18). Most of these vessels display a decoration made in the cord-impression technique, as do the three footed bowls. An often recurring decoration motif is triangles in any form; a typical pattern, seemingly unique to the Yamnaya or Catacombaya, consists of fringes or long triangles intermingled into each other, as published from Independența-Murighiol; Miloștea, tum. 3; and from Medgidia, all in the Romanian Dobrudja. More vessels with this specific decoration are known from the Ukraine.

Another, relatively common element of grave assemblages are animal bones and teeth as part of meat offerings either to the deceased and therefore found in or next to the burial chamber, or as part of meals consumed around the ceremonies of the burial or the erection of the tumulus, and therefore found around or on top of the graves and in the tumulus filling. Due to the lack of settlements in the archaeological evidence, these animal remains give us the only, although very selective, hint on the Yamnaya economy (Bökönyi 1978; Bökönyi 1979). As is to be expected and without going into too much detail, these animal bones represent almost all larger mammals: dogs, sheep/goats, cattle and horses. But there are also a few hunted animals such as deer and birds.

The final group of objects are stone stelae, often in their most elaborate form as anthropomorphic stelae (Telegin, Mallory 1994; Anthony 2007). These more often accompany Yamnaya tumuli and burials in the north-Pontic steppes than here in the west, and are, therefore, rightly seen as a further component of burial customs. In the area of the Western Yamnaya, anthropomorphic stelae are known from Baia de Criș (ancient Körösbánya; now in the Hunedoara county of west Transylvania, just on the fringes of the Carpathian lowlands); Baia-Hamangia and Chemurlija-de-Jos, both in the Dobrudja region of Romania; and from 13 sites in north Bulgaria (Krauss 2006, p. 81, plus the new site of Gorno Ablanovo). None are known from Serbia and Hungary. The un-worked stone stele from Mezöcsát (Endrödi 1995; Kalicz 1999) belongs to the underlying Baden cemetery rather than the tumulus itself. Of those stelae only the examples from Baia-Hamangia, and Nevsha and Placidol in Bulgaria, are linked with actual tumuli. Instead, they are always found in secondary positions.

DATING AND ATTRIBUTION

For the dating and the chronology of the Western Yamnaya, we have at our disposal a variety of absolute and relative data. The absolute dating is based on a dozen of ¹⁴C dates coming from Yamnaya tumuli and graves from all over the distribution regions discussed above. Of particular importance are the four new dates deriving from the recently published Sárretudavari-Örhalom site (Dani, Nepper 2006). As far as one can evaluate from the publications, all samples were charcoals from the graves. Since these had mostly been wooden beams, planks, or logs, one has to be cautious due to old-wood-effects. However, except for the two ¹⁴C dates from the Baia-Hamangia site in Romania which were made in the early days of the use of this method (BIn No. 29; KN No. 38) and therefore have margins of 160 calendar years, all the other data seem reliable and, when calibrated together, fall consistently in the range between 2950 and 2500 (1 sigma), and 3100 and 2475 (2 sigma) cal. B.C.

2. Miloștea is problematical in its attribution, because the burial customs cannot be determined due to the non-conservation of the skeletons.

The relative data consist of three different kinds of evidence:

1) Stratigraphic data coming from Yamnaya tumuli; these can be different burials in stratigraphic positions within the tumuli (internal), or, externally, information on their erection above graveyards or settlement sites of earlier or contemporary archaeological cultures:

At the moment, I think no secure internal relative chronology is possible due simply to the lack of funeral equipment and scarcity of ^{14}C -dates. I am therefore also not following attempts, by Romanian archaeologists in particular, to create a relative phasing on the basis of what is, in my opinion, a constructed evolution of burial customs (*e.g.* supine with flexed legs; crouched on the site; supine with extended legs) within the multiple occupation of tumuli and their internal stratigraphies (*e.g.* Burtănescu 2002; Irimia 2003), often with reference to Ukrainian/Moldovan internal chronologies (*e.g.* Early Yamnaya; Classical Yamnaya; Bugeac-variety; Catacombnaia; Srubnaya: Anthony 2007), which are again mostly based only on assumptions (*cf.* Kaiser 2003; Bunjatjan *et al.* 2006), and not on clear evidence.

It was N. Kalicz in particular (Kalicz 1989; Kalicz 1998; Kalicz 1999) who evaluated the “external” stratigraphies, typical on the one hand for the Carpathian basin, but on the other hand also mentioned in the case of the Prut-Siret interfluval and Muntenia regions in Romania (Dinu 1974; Comşa 1987; Roman *et al.* 1992). However, what they can deliver is only a “*terminus post quem*”. Methodologically strict, they say nothing about synchronism between sites. I can therefore only state that several Yamnaya tumuli have been erected above Boleráz and Baden settlements in Hungary and Serbia, and Cernavodă and Horodiştea sites in Romania, and in the cases of Mezöcsát-Hörcsögös and Tiszavasvári-Gyepáros in Hungary above existing Baden cemeteries, all of these dating to the end of the 4th millennium cal. B.C. The most important and chronologically most recent case is the Jabuka-Tri Humke tumulus in Serbia that was erected above a Kostolac-period settlement with four attested houses (Bukvić 1978; Bukvić 1987). The central grave pit even cuts into one of the houses. This Kostolac settlement itself was stratigraphically superposed over a Baden-period settlement with refuse pits, however was then covered by a 9.5cm thick humus layer. This situation gives a date well after *ca.* 3000 cal. B.C., in fine accordance with the ^{14}C -dates.

Another aspect dealing with external stratigraphies, however, raises the question whether all these super-positions are really accidental or if there was an intention behind them. If so, this can only be seen as a symbolic connection to potential or claimed ancestors, or as an act of actively taking previous remains and territory into one’s possession. But this is another issue.

2) Ceramics from local or neighbouring archaeological cultures incorporated into Yamnaya burial contexts: chronologically, all vessels, whether Cernavodă II, Ezero, Coţofeni, Vučedol, or Makó, which are allocated to strictly defined and well attributed Yamnaya graves, belong to archaeological cultures conventionally dated to the first half of the 3rd millennium cal. B.C. This is again in accordance with the ^{14}C -dates and the stratigraphical evidence.

3) Impact of the Yamnaya into neighbouring contemporary archaeological cultures: This clearly visible process, generally spoken of as the interaction of the Yamnaya with various contemporary societies living both close by and further away, is a fact and will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Secure attribution is crucial and, as has already been indicated, one must be very strict in this task. It is therefore *the* big question whether graves sharing incorporated elements other than the characterising Yamnaya ones, described with the burial customs above, can still be called Yamnaya in a strict definition. These other elements can vary, depending on the geography and cultural milieu: the incorporated pottery vessels from contemporary local or neighbouring archaeological cultures shall be counted as such, or burials arranged as cremations; to name the two elements most easily recognizable in the record. The latter is the most important element in the southern Carpathian basin, but also east of the Iron Gate, where the cremation tradition is a relevant component in burial customs since the Baden/Coţofeni period if not before. Examples of this are the long disputed graves under tumuli of Batajnica and Vojka in the Srem region, and of Srpski Krstur in the north Banat, both of Serbia; as well as cremations in Moldova Veche (Ostrov Humca and Ostrov Groblia) in Oltenia, and Tarnava, tum. 1 and Kalugerica in Bulgaria. Also, the

urned cremations in typical Boleráz and Baden vessels but under the round tumuli of Tolisavac-Banjevci (tum. 5; northwest Serbia: Jovanović 1990), Mokrin-Aradjanska Humka (Serbian Banat: Girić 1987), Šošari-Sač (east Bosnia; 12 Boleráz graves under a tumulus: Govedarica 2001), Pilismarot-Bisaharc (north Hungary; Boleráz) and from some sites in the river Sajó-valley west of the Tisza (Kovacs 1987) are always discussed in this context, although it should have become clear in the chronological discussion that they can precede the Yamnaya in its strict sense for centuries. However, what complicates the attribution are further typical Yamnaya customs such as strewing ochre on the urns in the cases of Batajnica and Vojka, or the genuine cord-decorated steppe (Yamnaya-) vessel in the case of Srpski Krstur. The adoption of both inhumations and cremations in the same tumuli at Tarnava and Kalugerica also questions the validity of this approach. Nevertheless, I am rather inclined not to call these cremations Yamnaya, as I would also excluded all burials with bodies in an extended supine position. More difficult is the evaluation of this syncretism when only foreign pottery vessels are included in an otherwise characteristic Yamnaya burial custom.

Here, I think one has to assess the cases individually and in their context. In any case, they display three different scenarios:

- 1) at the one end of the spectrum, these are Yamnaya people adopting burial aspects of local or neighbouring societies. However they still remain Yamnaya people in terms of their identity, and can therefore be fully compared to those burials still applying the strict Yamnaya rite;
- 2) the other extreme sees people of neighbouring societies adopting burial aspects of the Yamnaya, and incorporating these into their own ideas;
- 3) in between, sees people losing their previous strict identities and merging into new ones, perhaps after a certain period of cooperation.

As the Boleráz and Baden tumuli cases in Serbia and Hungary demonstrate, there are earlier, 4th millennium cal. B.C. round tumuli in the Carpathian basin.³ There are also earlier north-Pontic steppe populations who infiltrated similar environments west of the Black Sea prior to the rise of the Yamnaya culture. This situation can be traced back to the 2nd half of the 5th millennium cal. B.C. to a group of distinct burials, zoomorphic maceheads, long flint blades, triangular flint points, etc., summarized under the term Suvurovo-Novodanilovka (Govedarica 2004; Rassamakin 2004; Anthony 2007; Heyd forthcoming 2011). They also erected round personalized tumuli, though smaller in size and height, above inhumations of single individuals. Suvorovo and Casimcea are the key examples in the lower Danube region of Romania. In northeast Bulgaria, the primary grave of Polsko Kosovo (ochre-stained supine extended body position: information communicated by S. Alexandrov) can also be seen as such, as should the Targovishte-“Gonova mogila” primary grave 1 in the Thracian plain with a burial arranged in a supine position with flexed legs, southeast-northwest orientated, and strewn with ochre (Kanchev 1991, p. 56-57; Ivanova Gaydarska 2007). In addition to the many copper and shell beads, the 17.4cm long obsidian blade is exceptional, which links this grave to the Csongrád-“Kettöshalom” grave in the south Hungarian plain (Ecsedy 1979). It also yielded an obsidian blade (13.2cm long) and copper, shell and limestone beads. However, no traces of a tumulus have been recorded above the Kettöshalom tomb. Conventionally, it is dated to the Bodrogkeresztúr-period in east Hungary, shortly after 4000 cal. B.C., which would correspond very well with the suggested Cernavodă I (or its less known cultural equivalent in the Thracian plain) attribution for the “Gonova mogila” grave, a cultural background to which the Csongrád grave should have also belonged. Bodrogkeresztúr and Cernavodă I periods are not the only examples of 4th millennium cal. B.C. tumuli and burials displaying this steppe connection. Indeed we can find this early steppe impact throughout the 4th millennium cal. B.C. These include ascriptions to the Horodiștea II (Corlăteni-Dealul Stadole, grave 1: Burtănescu 1998, p. 37; Holboca, grave 34: Comșa 1998, p. 16); to

3. As they occur further to the northwest, in the Baalberge culture of the Middle Elbe-Saale region in eastern Germany: Müller 2001, p. 311. The burial mounds in northern Moravia yielding actually a blend of TRB and Boleráz-Baden equipment are rather oblong and oval in their shape and stand in another tradition, and shall therefore not be considered in this context.

Gordinești-Cernavodă II (Liești-Movila Arbănașu, grave 22: Brudiu 2000); to Gorodsk-Usatovo (Corlăteni-Dealul Cetății, grave 1: Comșa 1998, p. 17-18, in Romania; Durankulak, grave 982: Vajsov 2002, in Bulgaria); and to Cernavodă III (Golyama Detelina, tum. 4: Leshtakov, Borisov 1995), and early (end of 4th millennium cal. B.C.) Ezero in Ovchartersi, primary grave (Kalchev 1994, p. 134-138) and Golyama Detelina, tum. 2 (Kanchev 1991) in Bulgaria. Also the Boleráz and Baden tumuli of Banjevac-Tolisavac and Mokrin in the south Carpathian basin account for this, since one should perhaps take into account primary grave 12 of the Sárretdudavari-Örhalom tumulus in the Hungarian Alföld: a left-sided crouched juvenile (15-17 y) individual in an oval, NW-SE orientated grave pit ¹⁴C dated to 3350-3100 cal. B.C. at 2 sigma (Dani, Nepper 2006). Neither the burial custom (no ochre strewing or depositing a lump of ochre has been recorded), nor date account for its ascription to the Yamnaya!⁴ All of these tumuli and burials demonstrate, though, that there is already a constant but perhaps low-level 4th millennium cal. B.C. steppe interaction, linking the regions of the north of the Black Sea with those of the west, and reaching deep into the Carpathian basin. This has to be acknowledged, even if these populations remain small, bounded to their steppe habitat with an economy adapted to this special environment, and are not always visible in the record. Indirect hints may help in seeing them, such as the frequent occurrence of horse bones, regarded as deriving from domesticated horses, in Hungarian Baden settlements (Bökönyi 1978; Benecke 1998), and in those of the south German Cham Culture (Matuschik 1999, p. 80-82) and the east German Bernburg Culture (Becker 1999; Benecke 1999). These occur, however, always in low numbers, perhaps not enough to maintain and regenerate a herd. Does this point us towards otherwise archaeologically hidden horse-breeders in the Carpathian basin, before the Yamnaya? In any case, I hope to make one case clear: these are by no means Yamnaya burials in the strict definition!

Attribution to the Yamnaya in its strict definition applies not only to the culture's beginnings, but also needs identification for the presumed end of this society, and the transition to the Catacombnaya. In Romanian Moldavia, F. Burtănescu (1998, p. 47) calls altogether 17 graves from different tumuli as Catacombnaya, although he has to admit (p. 43) that "so far, in the Carpathians-Prut area there are no data about Catacomb-like grave-pits among the Catacomb-grave burials". So his attribution is only based upon burial custom peculiarities, stratigraphic position in the tumuli, and views over the Prut border towards Moldova and the Ukraine, leading to the same methodological difficulties described above for the relative chronology. A similar account comes from E. Comșa (1998, p. 21-22) who also names a few steppe burials as Catacombnaya. However, at least he can identify the typical lateral catacombs for the graves 1, 23, 27 and 28 of the Smeeni-"Movila Mare" tumulus in Muntenia (*ibid.*, p. 22). In Bulgaria, the Golyama Detelina, tum. 2, grave 12 (Leshtakov, Popova 1995; Lichardus, Lichardus-Itten 2003) and the Mednikarnovo-Iskritza, tum. 2, grave 1-2 of the Thracian plain are said, beside some others, to be Catacombnaya. At least for the Mednikarnovo-Iskritza grave the catacomb grave pit can perhaps be followed from the published drawings (Panayotov, Alexandrov 1995; Ivanova Gaydarska 2007). In any case, one gets the impression that graves of the Catacombnaya in its proper sense are becoming rare in general as one leaves the Prut-Siret river catchment and the Dobrudja. Hungary and Serbia fit in very well with this observation: not a single grave that can be regarded as Catacombnaya is known.⁵ The youngest dated grave, showing a north-Pontic relation here, seems to be the Sárretdudavari-Örhalom, grave 7/7a with its rich metal inventory, described above, obviously showing a slackening in the later period of the strict equipment rules. Grave 7/7a's date should not be far away from nearby grave 9 which yields a ¹⁴C date of 2637-2489 B.C. (1 sigma), around the mid 3rd millennium B.C. (Dani, Nepper 2006). This leaves us with 400-500 Yamnaya years in the Carpathian basin. Taking all regions together, it seems that Catacombnaya is generally more confined to or at least centred on the northwest-Pontic steppes, with less frequent and intensive infiltrations to the lower Danube areas. I think one can make the statement here that a wave has come to an end in the mid 3rd millennium cal. B.C.!

4. This perhaps holds true also for the primary burials of Goran-Slatina, tum. 2, grave 13: supine position with extended legs; and tum. 7, grave 5: a left-sided crouched hocker.

5. The famous Vučedol-Gradac catacomb grave is different in its design and dates to a previous period, *i.e.* the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C.: Schmidt 1945.

INTERACTION

It is an obvious feature that incoming Yamnaya populations were not entering a completely empty, unpopulated space in the regions west of the Black Sea and the east Carpathian basin. Farming societies had been settling here since the Early Neolithic from around 6000 cal. B.C. onwards and settlement intensity and organization had seen many ups and downs with innovations and achievements incorporated in the 3000 years until the arrival of the first Yamnaya people. However, it should have been made clear by the distribution map of the Western Yamnaya that they were confining themselves solely to their own, well-known, steppe habitat and therefore not occupying, or pushing away and expelling, the locally settled farming societies. Also, living solely in the steppes requires another lifestyle, and quite different economic and social bases, most likely very different to the established farming societies. Although surely regarded as incoming strangers, they may therefore not have been seen as direct competitors. This argument can be further enforced when remembering that the lowlands and the steppes in the southeast of Europe had already been populated throughout the 4th millennium cal. B.C., as demonstrated above, by societies with a similar north-Pontic steppe origin and tradition, albeit in lower numbers. It is only for these groups that the Yamnaya may have become a threat but their common origin and perhaps a similar economic/social background with comparable lifestyles would surely have assisted to allow rapid assimilation. More important, though, is that farming societies in this region may therefore have been accustomed to dealing and interacting with different people and ethnic strangers for a long time. Nevertheless, one can, on the other hand, perfectly imagine that if more and more foreign people, speaking foreign languages and having foreign customs and behaviour, are entering a previously only sparsely inhabited area over a certain span of time, their culturally contrasting neighbours must have responded to it with growing concern. This seems to be the case especially when one also takes into consideration the physical differences of these incomers; some evidence (though a bit outdated) suggests that the Yamnaya were much taller on average than individuals of contemporary societies (Kalicz 1968, p. 59; Marcsik 1979; Comşa 2005; Zoffmann 2006). Other evidence, based on state-of-the-art research (for example Eiberg *et al.* 2008), is less conclusive. So, the evidence is ambivalent. In any case, all these arguments point towards the conclusion that one cannot speak of a Yamnaya invasion, as has been the sole approach for several decades.

When assessing farming and steppe societies' interaction from a general point of view, attitudes can diverge in three main directions:

- 1) the violent one; with raids, fights, struggles, warfare, suppression and finally the superiority and exploitation of the one over the other;
- 2) the peaceful one; with a continuous exchange of gifts, goods, work, information and genes in a balanced reciprocal system, leading eventually to the merging of the two societies and creation of a new identity;
- 3) the neutral one; with the two societies ignoring each other for a long time.

What we see from trying to understand the record of the Yamnaya, based on their tumuli and burials, and the local and neighbouring contemporary societies, based on their settlements, hoards, and graves, is likely a mixture of all three scenarios, with the balance perhaps more towards exchange in a highly dynamic system with alterations over time. However, violence and raids cannot be ruled out; they would be difficult to see in the archaeological record; or only indirectly, such as the building of hillforts, particularly the defence-like chain of Vučedol hillforts along the south shore of the Danube on the Serbian/Croatian border zone (Tasić 1995a), and the retreat of people into them (Falkenstein 1998, p. 261-262), with other interpretations also possible. And finally, we are dealing here with very different local and neighbouring societies, as well as with more distant contemporary ones, looking, in reality, rather like a chequer board of societies and archaeological cultures (see Parzinger 1993 for the overview). These display different regional backgrounds and traditions leading to different social and settlement organizations, different economic bases and material cultures in the wide areas between Prut and Maritza rivers, and Black Sea and Tisza river. They surely found their individual way of responding to the incoming and settling Yamnaya people.

In the wider perspective, what we observe all over the European continent in the early 3rd millennium cal. B.C. is a series of innovations in the material culture and fundamental changes in the social, economic

and ritual sphere. These innovations and changes even form a true horizon of transformation and cultural change in many European regions (Harrison, Heyd 2007). Some of their elements materialized in the archaeological record, such as the completely new weaponry icons of that period, including the copper shaft-hole axes and tanged daggers which can be traced back towards the Pontic steppes and the Caucasus. The same process accounts for the new casting technology, bi-valve casting forms (Primas 2007, p. 14-15), and the societal position of the metallurgist working with them, and his new display in the graves (Bátora 2002). Similarly elements such as a broader emphasis on livestock rearing on the subsistence level, advanced herding management, larger horses and sheep and different slaughtering patterns can only be logically explained by closer links to the steppes. It is in this context, where Yamnaya finds its place, and the obvious scenario sees the incoming Yamnaya transmitting a whole package of innovations and introducing changes.

We have already discussed this Yamnaya package and its content in full detail (Harrison, Heyd 2007), and it does not need to be explained here at any further length. However, three elements should be emphasized:

- 1) anthropomorphic stelae, as shown as typical for the Yamnaya have a much wider distribution in the early 3rd millennium B.C. (Casini *et al.* 1995; Casini, Fossati 2007; Heyd, Harrison 2007);
- 2) cord decoration: we can observe the adoption of this special decoration technique and its appearance on pottery vessels in many archaeological cultures in the southeast of Europe just in the period dated by many ¹⁴C dates to the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. (Roman *et al.* 1992; Bertemes 1998);
- 3) tumuli.

TUMULI

Another element of interaction is the round tumulus, to be seen not only as a personalised monument for remembering and worshipping venerated relatives and ancestors, thereby making it a place which creates a bond to the past and the otherworld and manifests the existing or presumed lineage, but also a landmark in an otherwise flat land and seemingly a manifestation of possession and territory. Tumuli are therefore better thought of as social and ideological monuments of the living as well as the dead rather than simply ritual ones. However for the Western Yamnaya tumuli, we do not know exactly who has been buried and under what regulations and rules. Are these close family or kin tumuli? Or could anyone from another family or kin group accidentally wandering nearby have re-used an existing tumulus for one of their members? Is a Yamnaya tumulus, therefore, more a monument of cultural identity than family or kin affiliation? At the moment there are only the ¹⁴C dates for the Sárrétudvari-Örhalom tumulus and their wide range can be interpreted more in favour of the second scenario.

At least this landmark aspect can be demonstrated when checking the only two available assessments on the positioning of 3rd millennium B.C. west-Pontic tumuli in the landscape: the one from F. Falkenstein (1998) on the tumuli around the Titel plateau in the Serbian Bačka region; and the other by B. Ivanova Gaydarska (2007) on the tumuli of the Maritza-Istok open-air mine.⁶

As explained above, Yamnaya tumuli are not the first to be erected in their distribution areas but what we see in the early 3rd millennium B.C. is a real wave of tumulus construction in the lowlands of the Danube, Tisza, Prut, Maritza, and their tributaries. Besides these original Yamnaya kurgans, we can observe, again in the first half of the 3rd millennium cal. B.C., in almost all neighbouring, and sometimes more distant regions, the emergence of personalised round tumuli. Five distinct areas of tumulus erection and concentration can be listed around the actual Yamnaya distribution area, often in the immediate vicinity:

6. Although given the title as “topographical distribution...”, P. Patay (1987) is rather describing the wider geographical pattern of tumuli in the central Carpathian basin than trying to explain their location in the landscape.

- 1) The east Banat and west/southwest Transylvania. The tumuli here have been described at length most notably by H. Ciugudean (*e.g.* 1991; 1995; 1996), and therefore do not need to be described any further. Mostly, they are quite small and low, and stones were used in their construction. Culturally, they belong to the late Coțofeni, and successive archaeological cultures such as Livezile in west, and Șoimuș in southwest Transylvania. More 3rd millennium cal. B.C. tumuli are reported from other parts of Transylvania.
- 2) The East-Slovakian burial mounds (though with a question mark). After an evaluation by M. Novotná (1987; see also Kalicz 1968, p. 24), with reference to V. Budinsky-Krička (1967; 1991), around 350 registered tumuli are known from 45 localities in the mountainous forelands of the Carpathians in east Slovakia. By their pottery equipment, they show an amalgam of an inner Carpathian culture (Nyírség-Zatin) and Corded Ware traditions originating from north of the Carpathians, that is, present-day south Poland (Bertemes 1998, p. 201). However, this Corded Ware input can be dated and refers only to the later Corded Ware Lubaczów group, dating it more towards the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. We do not know yet, if some of the tumuli might also contain earlier burials, characterized by a lack or scarcity of equipment, as it is common for example in the Carpathian flatlands; therefore the question mark remains;
- 3) Dalmatia and the east Adriatic Coast. This is a large tumulus province, extending all the way along the Dalmatian coast (Croatia; Montenegro) and into its hinterland, but also reaching deep into Bosnia. Some tumuli in Albania may also belong to this group, as perhaps do the handful of tumuli of the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. in North Italy, and a few others in Apulia via the Adriatic Sea (Bianchin Citton 2004; Ingravallo *et al.* 2007). B. Govedarica has reported on them (1987; 1989), as did M. Primas in her monograph on the Velika Gruda tumulus (1996) and I. Kilian-Dirlmeier on the Steno necropolis on the Ionian Island of Levkas (Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005). The named Velika Gruda and the neighbouring Mala Gruda tumuli are the most prominent of this kind but also tumuli, or presumed ones, in Danilo, Rubez, Čemenci and Podgorica have yielded extraordinary equipment (see also Harrison, Heyd 2007). Culturally they all belong to the Adriatic aspect of the Vučedol culture, followed by further tumuli of the Proto-Cetina/Cetina;⁷
- 4) Transdanubia, southwest Slovakia, and the Austrian Burgenland: here, a small but well-defined and chronologically coherent cluster of tumuli have come to light, with its excavated and recorded protagonists in Neusiedl am See (Ruttikay 2002; Ruttikay 2003); Gönyü and Rajka in Hungary; and Čaka and Šurany in Slovakia. Perhaps, also the double inhumation of Wien-Essling, which has yielded a copper dagger of the Manyč-type and therefore displays clear steppe relations (Zimmermann 2003), was originally covered by a small tumulus. Further Yamnaya links are shown by the Neusiedl am See grave with its golden temple/hair spiral, the most western specimen of this typical steppe jewellery. Adjacent to, or located in the Little Alföld, this group of tumuli culturally belongs to aspects of Makó/Kosihy-Čaka, Vučedol, and early Somogyvár (Kulcsár 2009);
- 5) the largest continuous tumulus zone is again, as in the case of the cord decoration, the distribution area of the Corded Ware and Single Grave Cultures of Central and North-Central Europe (Heyd 2007; Kristiansen 2007). Here, the rather small and not so high Corded Ware tumuli are attested all over (Buchvaldek 1987), either preserved until the present day in the more wooded regions, or documentable due to frequently appearing circular ditches or empty spaces in between the burials (for examples see Franzhausen in Austria; or Vikletice in Bohemia). Areas of transmission of the tumulus idea are potentially, on the one hand, in Austria and Moravia as neighbouring regions of the west Carpathian (Transdanubian) basin; or, on the other hand, south Poland, via the passes over the Carpathians to the *e.g.* East-Slovakian tumuli; more likely, however, is southeast Poland, or the border region with Moldova and the Ukraine, in the catchment area of the rivers San, Prut and Dnestr, and the Yamnaya there (Szmyt 2000; Szmyt 2003; Furholt 2008; Kadrow 2008).

7. The tumuli of the West-Serbian Belotić-Bela Crkva-group are younger and belong to the middle, or rather, the 2nd half of 3rd millennium B.C.: Garašanin 1987. However there is also a note on Tolisavac, tum. 11 with Coțofeni-pottery and copper objects, which Garašanin regards as a cremation grave or cenotaph.

It becomes obvious, when mapping early 3rd millennium B.C. tumuli and their regional concentration that tumulus erection is as selective as the adoption of other elements of the Yamnaya package: some societies incorporated it in their own burial ideology, others did not, depending on previous burial customs, social organization, beliefs, etc.

THE NATURE OF THE YAMNAYA-IMPACT

Virtually every scholar dealing with the Yamnaya sees it as a true pastoral society, with a full nomadic lifestyle (see, for the most recent examples, Anthony 2007 and Kristiansen 2007). Often it is even referred to as being the first true nomadic society in Europe, and, therefore, is often regarded as the initial forerunner of historical populations and tribes such as the Scythians, Huns, Avars, Magyars and Mongols to name only those with the deepest footprint. Occasionally, a blanket comparison is made between them. So, the standard mental reconstruction is of people and families living in tents, or, to use the name given in historical accounts, “yurts”, and wandering around covering long distances with their livestock, and equipment piled up on wagons and pack animals, always in the search for new grassland for their herds of cattle, sheep, and domesticated horses. Depending on the sophistication of the assessment, one grants them seasonal rhythms or more targeted movements, campsites, claims over territory, violent raids using their swift horses but also specialized exchange with farming societies, or family and clan based social order, distinct gender roles, as well as a patri-lineal and patri-local social world.⁸ But can one really make the statement that the Yamnaya was a true mobile and nomadic society? I do not think we can – perhaps not yet – the final proof, *e.g.* based on scientific evidence, is still missing.⁹ However there are many archaeological arguments that speak in favour of such a lifestyle and such an economic organization. This is, as shown above, their unconditional dependence on the steppe environment; the missing settlement evidence; the ox-pulled wagon grave of Placidol and its links with the north (Kaiser 2007); the animal bones, and particularly the horse bones, found in the graves and the tumuli; and finally their seemingly abrupt appearance at *ca.* 2950 cal. B.C. west of the Black Sea in the lower Danube and the Carpathian basin, with an unequivocal zone of origin in the north-Pontic steppes some hundred kilometres away. All the rest mentioned above remains an assumption, apart from perhaps the predominance of male primary burials.

But is the first appearance really that abrupt and how do we begin to understand it? Also as shown above, there was a continuous connection already from the middle of the 5th millennium B.C. between populations of the north and west-Pontic regions and people living generally in similar environmental conditions. This connection endured, beyond the Yamnaya impact under its strict definition, well into the 2nd half of the 3rd millennium cal. B.C., and then deep into the second millennium, and on. Only an oscillation in quantity and range is visible. It is clear that this connection included not only the exchange of goods and innovations but, from the very beginning, also of people from the north entering the plains of the west. These foreign people interacted with the local societies. Yamnaya has to be seen in this consistent stream and the best term to apply to this is “infiltration”. The record, and our interpretation of it, seems to show that this seeping-in was only on a low level for a long time, and, moreover, was often not that far-reaching. This situation obviously changed around *ca.* 2950 cal. B.C., and the infiltration might have swollen to a real current of immigration. I am not thinking that this happened in a single event but in several waves, again oscillating in terms of the number of people involved; sometimes more, sometimes less. They might have

8. In his recent book D. Anthony (2007) is even going beyond this by postulating more social characteristics, such as distinct gender roles, and “the importance of fathers and brothers in the herding units” (p. 328); or “chiefs who sponsored feasts and ceremonies” (p. 331) and special patron-client-relationships (p. 303), and hosting/feasting and sacrifices (*ibid.* and p. 304). Although quite stimulating in their dimension, these traits are all not reflected in the record and are therefore impossible to prove.

9. Isotope analyses may help and two projects dealing with subsistence and mobility patterns of steppe populations are currently in progress at Bristol University.

arrived over decades, even perhaps for a few centuries. Nevertheless this was pronouncedly much more than before, during the 4th millennium B.C., or afterwards, during the 2nd half of the 3rd millennium B.C. To cross such long distances, they must also have been well organized, either in loose family alliances (the most likely scenario) or in clans, in any case with a clear leadership and structure. But this degree of organization remains invisible in the record due to the special burial customs. We must also surely count on groups of Yamnaya people returning to their original northwest and north-Pontic steppes. This is the most likely interpretation of two special cases in the record: a Coţofeni-vessel from a Yamnaya-grave at Taraklya at the Dnestr river in Moldova (Dergačev 1998, fig. 20, 2; Anthony 2007, p. 366), and a typical Makó handled pot from Sofievka, tum. 10, grave 1 on the left side of the Dnepr river in the Cherson oblast of the Ukraine (Rassamakin, Nikolova 2008). In all likelihood, the individuals buried here made exchanges for these vessels in the lower Danube area, more specifically in northwest Bulgaria or Romanian Oltenia; and in the north-central Carpathian basin, the Yamnaya distribution zone is closest to Makó/Kosihiy-Čaka. If the comparisons are right, these vessels even span a distinct period, with the Coţofeni covering more the beginning of the Yamnaya infiltration, while the Makó handled amphora-like vessel dating closer to the mid of the 3rd millennium cal. B.C. They seem to be evidence of returning people and, therefore, also of circular movements (cf. Anthony 1997). This leads to another scenario, or interpretation: namely that the infiltration of Yamnaya populations should simply to be seen as an extension towards the west and southwest of their normal north-Pontic roaming area. The background for such an event could have been climatic changes and a further dry-out of the steppes would have forced people and their livestock to travel further into the west and therefore closer to a more Atlantic-dominated climate zone and more precipitation (see Anthony 2007, table 13.1). Likewise, steppe populations, which had settled here previously, could have passed on information about the best living conditions and pastures available at the time, which would have made it easier for more people to make the decision to move.

In any case, they neither conquered their way up the Danube and Prut, and into the Carpathian basin, nor was their arrival a traumatic event. There may have been local conflicts and raids but, as pointed out above, this is very difficult to observe in the record and diverging interpretations of existing evidence are also possible. Anything more than this is pure speculation. Much more interesting, however, and clearly visible in the record, are signs of interaction with adjacent contemporary societies as well as of the exchange of ideas, innovations and material culture. There is no doubt that this transmission of a new and innovative cultural package is the real essence of the Yamnaya's impact. Consequently, it was the selective reception of social and ideological components by both neighbouring and more distant societies that caused a transformation horizon affecting much of Europe in the early 3rd millennium B.C. Tumuli and the background of their social and ideological attitudes towards both the dead and the living are only a part of this, but clearly the most durable part.

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THE OLDEST ROUND BARROWS OF THE EUROPEAN LOWLANDS

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ABSTRACT

The oldest round barrows in Central Europe date back to the beginning of the 4th millennium B.C. They were registered mainly in the Baalberg group in the Middle Elbe-Saale region in today's Germany and in the milieu of the Funnel Beaker culture in Cuiavia, Poland. The origin of these structures is very controversial since they have been seen as the remains of influences linked to the Black Sea area. The next round barrows, left by societies of the Corded Ware complex, appeared at the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C. in a considerably altered landscape. In the Polish lowlands earthen long-barrows, burial mounds with stone cists and passage graves were already consistent elements of social space. In this paper, the authors intend to consider possible relationships between the mentioned constructions in terms of their historical aspects and degree of significance.

INTRODUCTION

The 3rd millennium B.C. witnessed the spread of barrows built over the graves of the dead. This custom is one of the distinctive markers of a number of corded-ware archaeological cultures whose range covered the vast expanses of eastern and Central Europe, and southern Scandinavia. Its origins are an object of a long-standing controversy among archaeologists. Many believe that the barrows were derived from external influences. It does not matter to them that the custom of burying the dead beneath barrows has deep Middle Neolithic roots in Central Europe. This is a result of a tendency to, on the one hand, contrast long structures (autochthonous) with round ones (allochthonous), and, on the other, to ascribe not only steppe origins to all the Neolithic societies that built barrows (a habit which has a long tradition in archaeology) but also a revolutionary impact on the development of European civilization, including, most importantly, its Indo-Europeanization. For round barrows are one of the major indicators of mobile populations, according to some hypotheses, even politically aggressive ones, the appearance of which led to far-reaching economic and social changes. In the wake of these processes, relatively egalitarian and settled societies of the Middle Neolithic disintegrated. A relentless search through source registers for the remains of hypothetical allochthonous societies, which were supposedly the major cause of changes in Central Europe in the 4th, and especially in the early 3rd, millennia B.C., triggered a long and lively discussion, which, though starting vehemently, lost steam rather suddenly.

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GRAVES UNDERNEATH BARROWS NORTH OF THE CARPATHIANS

The greatest emphasis on the significance of the impact by “barrow culture” societies was laid in the theories developed by M. Gimbutas, extensively quoted in the literature.¹ The core of the theories was this author’s conviction in multiple migrations to Central Europe by the societies that at an earlier date had inhabited the Black Sea steppes. Either their physical presence or population movements (“escapes”) caused by them, supposedly exerted impact on local settled populations beginning in the 4th millennium B.C.² The use of grave mounds by corded-ware cultures – including Corded Ware culture (CWC), Single Grave culture (SGC), Battle Axe culture (BAC), Protruding Foot Beaker culture and Middle Dnieper culture – was also supposedly a result of steppe influences.³ However, they were not direct results of steppe population movements into Central Europe or even further into western Europe and southern Scandinavia. The role of intermediary, in the transmission of Black Sea cultural patterns, was allegedly played by Globular Amphora Culture (GAC) societies, which, in M. Gimbutas’s approach, were associated with the steppes.⁴ It was also in this way that the custom of covering graves with round barrows was adopted. In M. Gimbutas’s theory, the whole barrow tradition, which includes the custom of building mounds, has roots entirely in the Black Sea region. This assumption is important for the discussion on the origins of barrows in Central Europe: if M. Gimbutas’s assumptions are accepted, any alternative theories, which locate the sources of the barrow tradition (present in corded-ware cultures) in local, central European cultures of the Middle Neolithic, lose their *raison d’être*. The oldest round barrows are known from the Baalberg group in the Middle Elbe-Saale region in modern day Germany and from the cemeteries of Funnel Beaker Culture (FBC) societies in Cuiavia (Kujawy), Poland. According to M. Gimbutas, the emergence of these grave forms was brought about by the migration of the Lengyel culture societies that were subject to acculturation and pressure by “steppe culture” societies, pouring into the Carpathian Basin.⁵ Hence, the custom of building barrows was supposedly transmitted by Lengyel culture populations, although it must be observed that barrows, in principle, do not occur in this archaeological culture. Moreover, the two named areas where barrows were discovered form the northern frontier of compact Lengyel settlement in Europe. Further still, in the 4th millennium B.C., steppe populations, characterized by stable settlement and a small demographic potential, ventured into the Carpathian Basin above all in search for metals. Hence, their physical presence was not an immediate cause of any major socio-cultural changes.⁶ Therefore, the eastern origins of the custom of building the oldest round grave mounds remain highly hypothetical. Also, M. Gimbutas adopted a hypothesis claiming that individual waves of steppe peoples pouring into Central Europe consisted of pastoral populations. However, in the light of current hypotheses about the origins of these populations,⁷ M. Gimbutas’s hypothesis is not so obvious. Other assertions, on which her model depended, were criticised, too. To mention only one of them: the key role in introducing to Europe the practice of barrow-building given by her to the GAC (see below). What we know now of the origins of the culture makes the Black Sea steppes an entirely unlikely place for its origin.⁸

THE OLDEST CWC BARROW GRAVES ON THE POLISH LOWLANDS

In the Polish Lowlands, no CWC graves with preserved mounds have been recorded so far. Relying on analogies from neighbouring countries, it is widely assumed that graves surrounded by a circular ditch with a palisade placed within it were originally covered with a barrow. Such features have been discovered

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1. Cf. Chapman 1998.
 2. Gimbutas 1977, p. 302.
 3. Gimbutas 1991, p. 392-393.
 4. Gimbutas 1977, p. 306; Gimbutas 1980, p. 291-302.
 5. Gimbutas 1991, p. 364-366.
 6. Videiko 1994, p. 27-28.
 7. Koško, Szmyt 2004.
 8. Mallory 1994, p. 251; Szmyt 1996; Szmyt 1999.

so far in Kujawy – in Kuczkowo, Modliborzyce and Ciechrz – and in Psary, on the southern frontier of the Polish Lowlands (*fig. 1, 4*).⁹ However, one cannot exclude the possibility that some features with ditches have never been covered with a mound.¹⁰ Finding out how graves looked originally is difficult, because of a high degree of landscape transformation, involving the destruction of structures rising above the ground. The process grew in momentum during the 19th c. However, a few barrow graves of other societies, both Neolithic ones and societies from later on in the Bronze and Iron Ages, have survived until today, hence the destruction of CWC barrows seems to be very unlikely. In addition, thorough analyses of the sequence of ritual acts in CWC cemeteries have shown that barrow building was not part of all scenarios.¹¹

Among barrow graves, features having stone structures inside them seem to be far more durable. A special feature of this kind, a CWC grave, can be found in Krusza Zamkowa, Kujawy.¹² Above its grave pit, a small pile of stones was recorded and interpreted as the nucleus of a mound that has not survived (*fig. 2*). What is more, the grave is one of the oldest CWC features of this type in Europe and the determination of its age using human bones and the radiocarbon method yielded 4395 ± 70 conv. B.P. – (1 σ) 3250–2940 cal. B.C. The date has a comparatively small standard deviation against other, very early absolute dates.¹³

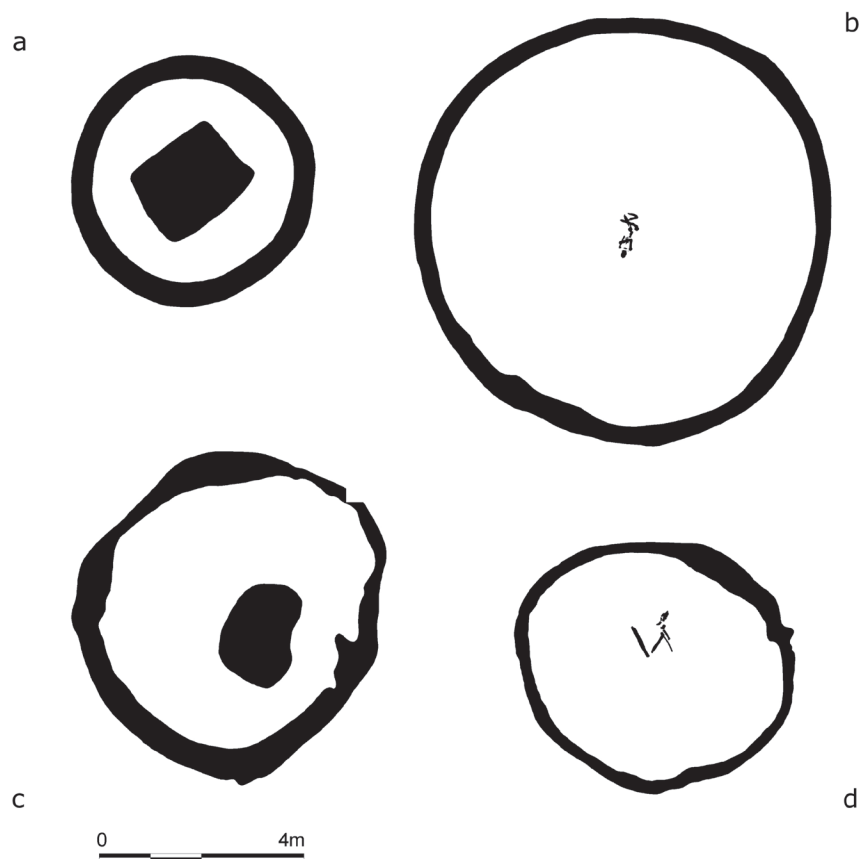


Fig. 1 – Outlines of all known CWC graves with a circular ditch in the Polish Lowlands between the Vistula and Oder: a) Kuczkowo (Czebreszuk 2000, p. 429, fig. 1); b) Modliborzyce (Wiślański 1978, p. 407, fig. 2); c) Ciechrz (Czebreszuk 2000, p. 431, fig. 4); d) Psary (Pospieszny 2009, p. 62, fig. 6).

9. Pospieszny 2009.

10. Czebreszuk, Szmyt in this volume.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Koško 1992; Koško 1997.

13. Furholt 2003.

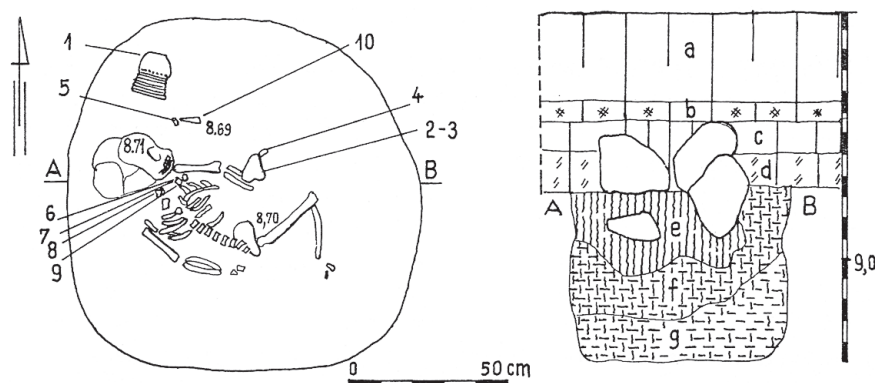


Fig. 2 – CWC grave from Krusza Zamkowa (Koško 1992, p. 87, fig 2).

A very early AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) ^{14}C date was obtained for a CWC grave in Żygląd, the Chełmno Land, east of Kujawy.¹⁴ The grave pit (human remains did not survive) was surrounded by a circular ditch with postholes. Charcoal fragments found in one of them were dated using ^{14}C dating to 4265 ± 35 conv. B.P. – (2 σ) 2970–2740 cal. B.C. However, the material used in the measurement may have come from thick tree-trunks, which may suggest old-wood syndrome in this precise case.

The other oldest, precisely dated CWC features in Europe include burial mounds located in Little Poland areas.¹⁵ Hence, relying on ^{14}C dates, it can be assumed that CWC rites took shape at the same time in both areas. This, however, does not answer the question concerning the origins of the custom of building round barrows. The question is a complex one as there are no convincing finds north of the Carpathians which directly indicate influences coming from the Black Sea area and characterized by a developed barrow tradition. Unlike in the case of the Carpathian Basin, there are no unquestionable examples of intrusion by steppe societies. This is particularly true of the Lowlands. From the periods preceding or coinciding with the rise of the CWC, we know of a single anthropomorphic figurine¹⁶ and few pottery imports traced to the Tripolye culture¹⁷ (and slightly more numerous imports of materials like Volhynia flint¹⁸ or basalts¹⁹). In the literature, a case in point being extensively discussed is the Mątwy group of the FBC. Some scholars consider it the result of close encounters with groups of the late Tripolye culture,²⁰ while others associate “Mątwy” pottery, at least, with the impact of the forest zone of eastern Europe.²¹ Therefore, archaeologists have focused up to now, on the one hand, on identifying potential local patterns making up the CWC, including funerary rituals, and, on the other, on identifying the societies that served as intermediaries in the transmission of steppe patterns.

BARROW CEMETERIES IN THE NEOLITHIC LANDSCAPE

There are very few burial mounds associated with the societies of the Baalberg group. For the most part, they were explored in the early 20th c., hence the methodology used and documentation preserved prevent one at times from establishing the stratigraphy of these features. This is quite important as barrows were

14. Kurzyk 2009.

15. Furholt 2003; Włodarczak 2006.

16. Kirkowski 1984.

17. Jastrzębski 1985.

18. Prinke, Rachmajda 1989.

19. Oral communication from Dr P. Chachlikowski.

20. Koško 1981; Koško 1988.

21. Kukawka 1997; Kukawka 2001; Daszkiewicz, Prinke 2001.

frequently used as burial places for centuries. Thus, establishing the sequence of their use and the identification of the oldest grave may occasionally prove difficult. In the drainage of the middle Elbe and Saale, there were twenty graves of the Baalberg group recorded. They were all covered with barrows²² and seven of them were central burials.²³ In the other cases, grave pits had been sunk into barrows, built by populations from other groups. In Kujawy, graves with round barrows were found only at a cemetery in Obafki, among earthen long barrows. The cemetery is associated with phase 2 of the Funnel Beaker culture, dated to 4200-3800 cal. B.C.²⁴ In the mound of the single excavated round barrow, a Baalberg-type amphora was discovered. Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell with any certainty whether or not the vessel comes from the original grave over which the barrow was built.

In the Polish Lowlands (*fig. 4*), round barrows over graves are found also in the cemeteries of the classic phase of the Globular Amphora culture, dated by M. Szmyt to 3200-2400 cal. B.C.²⁵ However, these features are rather exceptional because GAC graves were more often covered with oval mounds or sunk into natural elevations. A separate problem is the difficulty in identifying the original shape of the barrows resulting from the methodology of excavation used or the state of preservation of the features. The only barrow with a clearly preserved round mound, located in Sławęcin (*fig. 3:b*), was excavated in 1886.²⁶ In 1888, a badly damaged, probable round barrow was investigated in Rzeszynek.²⁷ In Padniewo, in 1893, the excavation of a reportedly round barrow was carried out.²⁸ All these features have one thing in common: the presence of a stone grave cist inside. Numerous finds of such structures were made under oval mounds; they were also sunk into older mounds of FBC long earthen barrows (*fig. 4*). These traits of GAC funerary rites draw our attention to an analogy parallel to external north-western cultural patterns and the fitting of monumental grave architecture into the local cultural landscape.

The stone structures recorded in GAC tombs, usually multiple ones, find no analogy in the solutions used by local FBC societies. The latter did not develop a tradition of erecting megalithic tombs, dolmens or passage graves, which are known primarily from the northern group of the FBC.²⁹ Hence, it can be assumed that burying the dead in cist graves is a borrowing from the areas of modern day northern Germany or southern Scandinavia, although the mechanism of this transmission of cultural patterns remains unknown. "Northern" traits in GAC rituals can

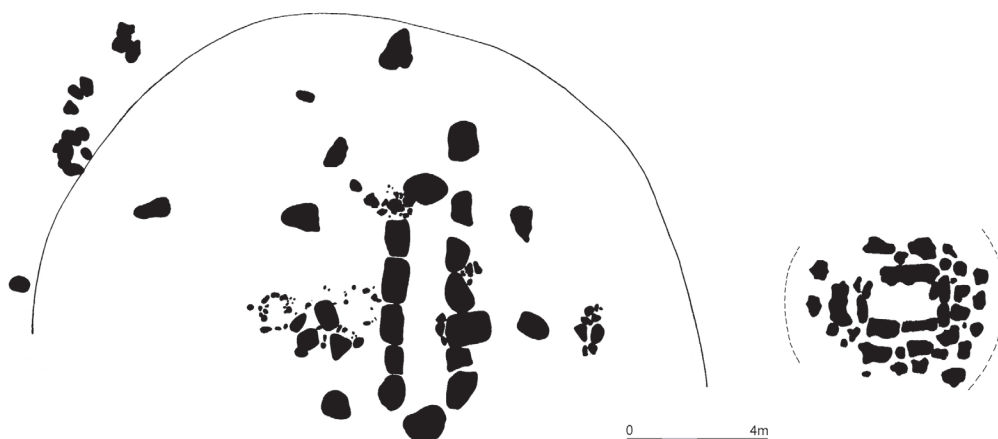


Fig. 3 – Site plans of parts of GAC barrows in (a) Złotów (Nosek 1967, p. 107, fig. 53) and (b) Sławęcin (Wiślański 1966, p. 199, fig. 38:19).

22. Müller 2001, p. 311.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 314, fig. 171.

24. Rzepecki 2004, p. 102, 129.

25. Czebreszuk *et al.* 2000.

26. Wiślański 1966, p. 138, 199, fig. 38:19.

27. Wiślański 1966, p. 163-165, fig. 19:7.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 162.

29. *E.g.* Tilley 1996.

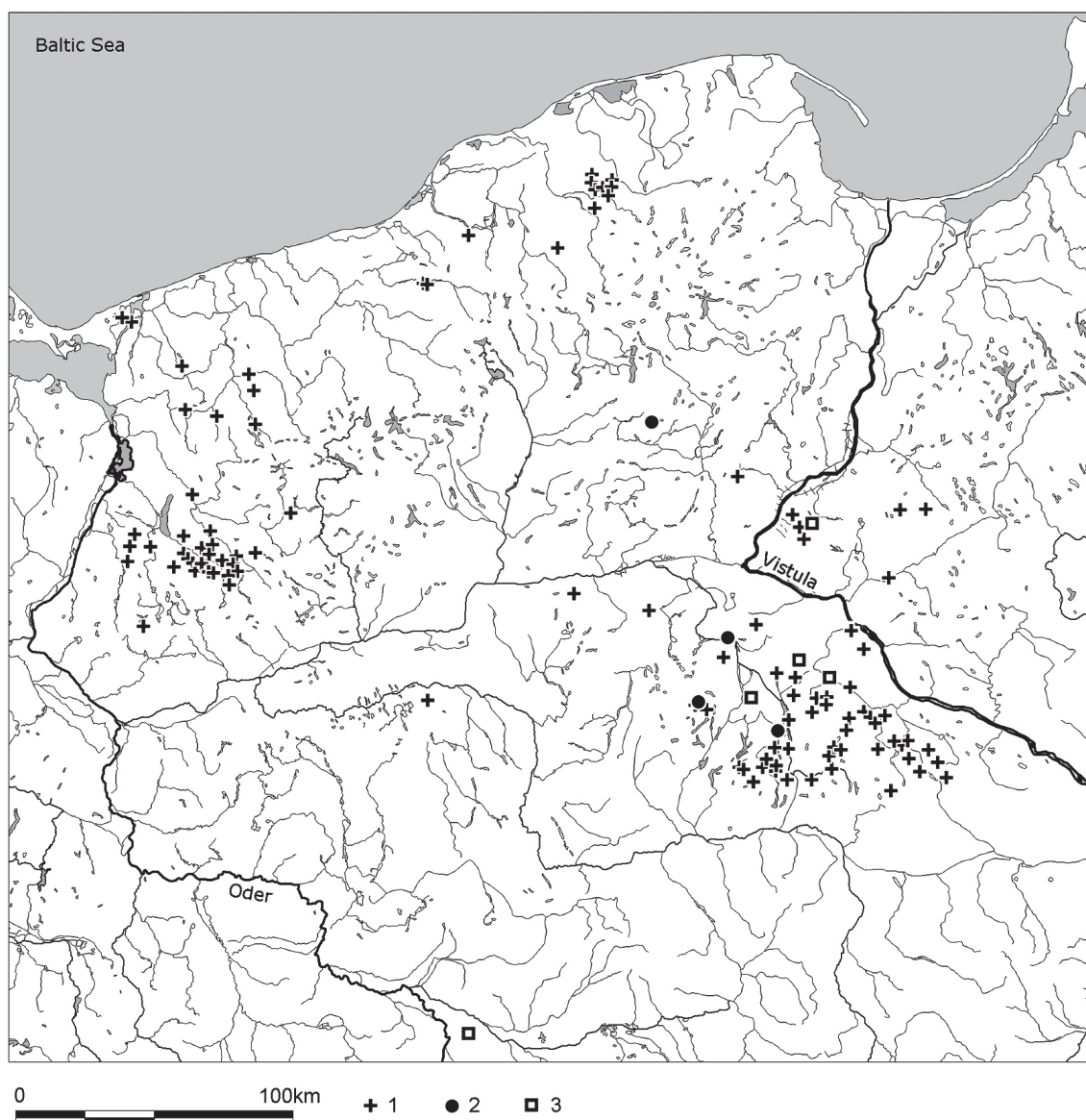


Fig. 4 – Polish Lowlands: the area between the Oder and Vistula rivers. Dispersion of 1) FBC sites with earthen long barrows; 2) GAC tombs with round mounds; 3) CWC graves with a circular ditch (following Wiślański 1966, Pospieszny 2010a, Pospieszny 2009).

be seen especially in building grave cists with a passage. Such features are known primarily from cemeteries in the Polish Lowlands³⁰ and only occur as exceptions east of the Vistula line (Skolobiv near Zhytomyr³¹), where Black Sea influences can be detected in the Neolithic. The latter included the use of grave cists of a different design, known as the Podolia type, rectangular or less frequently trapezoid in shape, and having walls built of large and well-fitted stone slabs.³² A GAC passage grave, in Złotów,³³ was found beneath a partially destroyed mound whose shape must have been almost round (fig. 3: a). Construction traits of GAC tombs thus show affinities mainly with northern Europe. Unavailability of absolute dates prevents us from determining whether

30. Szmyt 1996, p. 219, fig. 74.

31. Cf. Szmyt 1999, p. 313, pl. 33.

32. Szmyt 1996, p. 218.

33. Wiślański 1966, p. 197.

they could serve as a model for CWC barrows or whether both customs existed at the same time. What is more, both types of funerary rites represented radically different social realities in the Oder and Vistula basins. For GAC tombs usually served as a place of multiple burials, while CWC barrow graves contained single burials related to the rise of individualization.³⁴

GAC graves were often sunk into the mounds of older earthen FBC tombs. A scarcity of sources prevents us from grasping the pattern of locating CWC graves. Hence, there is no way of knowing whether corded-ware societies made use of existing cemeteries, hallowed by the remains of ancestors, or built barrows in new places. It must be stressed, however, that unlike, for instance, the area of the Little Poland³⁵ or southern Scandinavia,³⁶ on the Polish Lowlands, only single barrow graves were found, associated mainly with the oldest CWC phase (so-called A-Horizon). They never formed any cemeteries, which only appeared after 2500 cal. B.C. and were made up of flat graves, frequently built of stone-packing.³⁷ In this context, the grave at Krusza Zamkowa takes on a particularly interesting dimension – the oldest known CWC feature on the Polish Lowlands. It was discovered on an elevation in front of a cemetery where a FBC earthen long barrow, built in the late 5th or early 4th millennia B.C., was located along with a grave feature displaying FBC and CWC traits as well as a passage grave and an animal burial.³⁸ The latter feature was dated to 4330±35 conv. B.P. – (1σ) 3005-2905 cal. B.C.³⁹ In the past, the cemeteries were separated by a small river, the Smiernia, which today is barely visible in the landscape. Can the barrow from Krusza Zamkowa be a sign of the development of funerary rites or, speaking more broadly, of the development of the ideology of CWC communities, which initially fitted into the continuous use of cemeteries, only to symbolically break with it? To answer this question it is necessary to study in detail the history of individual cemeteries. A possible answer will not solve the problem of tracing the origins of the custom of barrow grave building. The continuous use of cemeteries can be viewed both as a continuation of social transformation processes, within existing cultural patterns and customs, and as an attempt to take over hallowed places by more progressive or immigrating communities. The cultural landscape then becomes a space in which the existing social order was negotiated and legitimized.

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF BARROW GRAVES

The emergence of the first CWC burial mounds in the early 3rd millennium B.C. was preceded by the building of the same features by Baalberg group communities one thousand years earlier. The hypothesis that there was continuity or overlapping between the two traditions cannot be proved. Nevertheless grave mounds formed part of the cultural landscape when the CWC was taking shape. Grave-goods, such as ceramics, axes and flint arrowheads, for the most part show affinities to artefacts known from older local cultural groups. Hence, one can hardly claim that cultural patterns were transmitted in one direction only. An alternative solution is to try to identify the vectors and mechanisms of cultural pattern circulation throughout Central Europe and southern Scandinavia. This is a valid approach because the circulation gave rise to other similar groups, next to the CWC, over a vast expanse of geography, *e.g.* the SGC and BAC, which preserved many local traits stemming from indigenous traditions. Cultural standardization on such a large scale could have been underpinned by social transformations taking place in Europe at the time, especially the phenomenon of individualization, which can be observed chiefly in the funerary rite. The oldest CWC was marked by single burials under a mound, with bodies lying almost exclusively in a crouched position and orientated E-W or N-S; men were laid on their right side with the face turned S or E,

34. Czebreszuk 1998, p. 41-42; Szmyt, Czebreszuk 2011.

35. Włodarczak 2006; Machnik 1998.

36. Hübner 2005.

37. Pospieszny 2009; Pospieszny 2010b.

38. Pospieszny 2010a.

39. Czebreszuk, Szmyt 2001, p. 185, table 1.

while women were placed on their left side facing S or E. A striking similarity in the strict adherence to the rules of burying the dead is observed in comparison to the rite of the Baalberg group. In covered graves or cuttings in mounds, the dead were laid in a crouched position, orientated E-W, with the head pointing E and the face turned N or the head pointing W and the face turned S.⁴⁰ A lack of concrete anthropological identifications, however, prevents us from establishing the relationship between sex and the position in a grave.⁴¹ Nevertheless, in both communities – the Baalberg group and CWC – mounds were inseparable from single graves, clearly indicating the significance of the deceased selected and the people burying them. This custom stands in a marked contrast to the practice of burying the dead in communal graves, a custom which appears for the first time nowhere other than in the Baalberg group.⁴² Moreover, a parallel in the use of single and multiple burials is to be found with the CWC.

CONCLUSION

This small contribution shows how equivocal and insufficient the sources are, which reflect the rise of the barrow idea in Central Europe. In our opinion they are not conclusive. By relying on them, no hypothesis, either an unequivocally steppe or exclusively local one, can be built concerning the origins of the custom of building specific grave mounds. On the other hand, in this case, the ambiguity may also mean diversity. For the available sources may indicate that the historical process of the spreading of barrow building was stimulated both by local and Black Sea factors. Moreover, it was also related to other social and economic processes taking place at that time. The changes were initiated in the 4th millennium B.C. Round barrows began to be built over the graves of selected persons, standing out owing to their grave-goods. Once the ideology of Corded Ware complex communities took its final shape, the barrow became a common grave form – a demonstration of individualization and membership in the social elite.

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40. Preuss 1966, p. 34-42.

41. Müller 2001, p. 317-318.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

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BRONZE AGE MORTUARY PRACTICES IN THRACE

A PRELUDE TO STUDYING THE LONG-TERM TRADITION

Krassimir LESHTAKOV *

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the tradition in mortuary practices of the BA populations in south eastern Europe. Tradition is highlighted as a system of values, skills and practices, reflecting the essential characteristics of a given community, which it preserves in time, passing it down from generation to generation. In a broad sense the concept includes customs, languages, ceremonies, beliefs and institutions which are either part of the life of the respective society and community, or a given special value – moral, religious, educational or political. At the same time, in this specific case, tradition is seen in the context of religious beliefs. This paper offers a critical analysis of the model of the Lower Danubian variant of the PGC (Pit-grave culture), which currently prevails according to opinions about this region and this period. The view is expressed that this model cannot provide a satisfactory explanation of cultural changes, nor of elements which remained unchanged over millennia. The way out of this situation is to be sought in the paradigm of *l'École des Annales*, in particular in long periods interrupted essentially not by a geographical factor but by a religious doctrine. An attempt is made to deconstruct the common notion that the different cultures of the 3rd millennium B.C. can be separated according to their funerary customs and that any change in these customs reveals the intrusion of a new ethnic group. Funerary customs can basically be viewed as different manifestations of a “*longue durée*” of one and the same overarching tradition. They can be traced from the end of the 2nd mill. B.C. and generally come to an end with the adoption of Christianity as the official religion. Even at a later date some of its elements remain, shaping the pagan substrate of Christianity.

This paper concerns the tradition¹ of mortuary practices during the Bronze Age in Upper Thrace and the adjacent regions considered the cradle of Thracian civilization. It aims at establishing stable elements in time, external influence and social change on a small and medium scale. The point of view preferred here allows the interpretation of mortuary practices as part of the religious beliefs of ancient populations, without bringing forth the *social reproduction*, *mortuary domain*, *conceptualization of time and space* and other instruments of *social archaeology*. It leaves such concepts to those who are interested in them and share them.

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1. The notion “tradition” here stands for a system of values, skills and practices, reflecting the essential characteristics of a given community which it preserves in time, passing them down from generation to generation. In a broad sense the concept includes customs, languages, ceremonies, beliefs and institutions which are either part of the life of the respective society and community, or a given special value – moral, religious, educational or political values.

The task appears simple only at first glance, as information is disproportionately spread, as far as geography (*synchronic principle*) and chronology (*diachronic principle*) are concerned. For some micro-regions and for some periods it is sufficient in quantity and quality. For others it is scant or altogether missing. As it is more important to investigate the diachronic aspect of the problem, it is worth saying that the line of continuity seems to be broken and gives an impression of “disappearance” and “revival” of particular rituals, which may be due either to objective circumstances or erroneous judgment of scholars. Any generalization also could be dubious, as the re-appearance of elements may be explained equally by outward impulses (*synchronic principle*) and the interference of tradition (*diachronic principle*). The latter case is based on the hypothesis of powerful conservative trends in this aspect of spiritual life, provided of course that it has been established first that the element analyzed does not belong to the adjacent synchronic group. Moreover the conclusions should be based on specific features, sufficient to allow us to determine a group, or a system, defined by a region (*space*) as well as a chronology (*time*).

The analysis of mortuary practices from the point of view of the survival and preservation of tradition is a novelty in the historiography of this region. In Bulgarian literature the term “tradition” is familiar as far back as the 1980s (Katinčarov 1980), but it has been used to differentiate separate ethnic groups (identified through their “different traditions”), and not to reveal the elements of culture which define continuity and form the tradition itself. The main problems that scholars are facing when analysing mortuary practices are as follows: origins; time and stages of penetration; routes of diffusion and specific information within the framework of the archaeological cultures of south eastern Europe through the Early Bronze Age (EBA). Essentially there are several basic questions concerning the bearers of those practices in historiography: *when did they arrive* and *where did they come from*? Evidently, it implies that the concepts “typical mortuary practice” and “ethnic appurtenance”² of these bearers are identical. Even the Pit-grave culture-tradition (PGC) is anthropologically identified (in respect of ethnic peculiarities) with its bearers (Panayotov 1989, p. 48).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EBA MORTUARY PRACTICE IN BULGARIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY. THE CURRENT STATE OF ISSUES

One of the first attempts to systematize archaeological records claims that there are two traditions in Bulgarian lands from the beginning of the EBA: those of burials without barrows (*tumuli*) and with *tumuli*. The flat burials from Ezero (intramural) and the Bereketska Tells (extramural) fall in the former and are associated with agricultural communities as early as the Neolithic period. The latter is explained by the migration of steppe tribes attributed to the “Pit-grave culture” at “a comparatively early stage of its development”. The territory of present day Bulgaria was divided into three regions – north eastern Bulgaria, where the *tumuli*-tradition prevails, south eastern Bulgaria where flat cemeteries dominate, and northwestern Bulgaria, characterized by the interface of both (Katinčarov 1980, p. 170-172). As a rule Katinčarov links flat cemeteries with those of Central Europe, the Aegean, Anatolia, and in particular Troy. The burial mounds in southern Bulgaria are attributed to a “later phase” of the BA. This view, expressed in many other articles, is no doubt influenced by his close collaboration with N.Y. Merpert, one of the leaders of the Ezero excavations and author of one of the first studies on the PGC in south eastern Europe on the base of his original investigations (1965).³ Here we should also note the role of another scholar dealing with the prehistory of the steppes, who is closely involved in PGC and Bulgarian questions: V. Dergachov. Thus we arrive at the study where an attempt is made to establish the existence of the Lower Danubian PGC, which includes a considerable part of present day Bulgaria (Panayotov 1989). B. Nikolov, P. Georgieva,

2. “Ethnic appurtenance” here stands for the element of archaeological culture in the Marxist sense of the term, which presupposes “ethno-cultural” appurtenance and self-determination.

3. The unpublished “Doctor of Sciences” thesis of N.Y. Merpert dates to as early as 1961, that is almost contemporary with the early “Kurgan studies” by M. Gimbutas.



Fig. 1 – A map of the cultural divisions of EBA Bulgaria according to opinions mentioned in the text.

St. Alexandrov, M. Kanchev, L. Nikolova and sporadically the author of this contribution have subsequently dealt with the matter. As a historiographical analysis of Bulgarian archaeological literature has already been completed (with summaries by Nikolova 1999; Menkova 2006), the results need not be repeated. Suffice it to recapitulate the conclusions on several points, with an emphasis on recent research:

1. we already mentioned the tri-partial division of the Bulgarian territory according to the penetration of the EBA cultures Černavoda III-II/Ezerovo, Magura-Coțofeni and Ezero (with a variant in the literature “Ezero/Yunatsite culture”). Hence mortuary practices are defined according to archaeological cultures, completely in line with Marxist methodology (*fig. 1*);
2. the **Černavoda III-II/Ezerovo** archaeological culture or “pottery group” (north eastern Bulgaria and the Western Black Sea Coast) is defined as follows in some publications: flat extramural cemeteries with inhumation and intramural cemeteries with inhumation (a local tradition) and barrow cemeteries with inhumation, attributed to the PGC (Menkova 2006, p. 27-28) with single and double burials and collective graves as well as “rich” and “poor” graves;
3. **Magura-Coțofeni (Northwestern Bulgaria)**: flat extramural cemeteries with cremation and intramural cemeteries with inhumation (a local tradition) and barrow cemeteries with inhumation (pit-grave tradition). The interface in funerary practices is seen with the appearance of stonework and cremation in tumuli, dated to the Coțofeni II period. The process ended with the disintegration of PGC, recorded in the graves from Lovets, Harlets and Tarnava I (Alexandrov 1994, p. 88, n. 59);
4. **Ezero/Yunatsite** archaeological culture (Upper Thrace): here the variety is impressive. We find flat extramural burials with inhumation; intramural adults and children with inhumation (in urns or ordinary pits) and cremation in urns; barrows with inhumation (“PGC tradition”), cremation and bi-ritual burials. Considerable variations appear, for example graves on platforms, without pits (Dolno Sahrane), stone stelae (“kamenye babyi”), stone mortuary enclosures and stones covering/heaped over the pits; “rich” and “poor” graves, etc. There is even a single pot-grave (inhumation) of twins in a ditch-enclosure (Leshtakov 2006, p. 422, *fig. 12*; p. 428);
5. **South Western Bulgaria**: So far, by chance, only one tumulus grave with inhumation from EBA 3 has been found (Rupite locality, Petrich region); however any precise evidence is unreliable as the monument has been destroyed by treasure hunters. Judging from the rich inventory, it could be interpreted as the grave of a smith or jeweller (*fig. 2*).

The three regions have their specific features which are attributed to the “local tradition”, and common features which stem from the “PGC-tradition”. In order to explain this phenomenon, I. Panayotov has equated “tradition” with “archaeological culture”, suggesting that different archaeological cultures could have existed in one and the same territory but, however, in separate micro-regions. Moreover, he doubts the attribution of the open-air settlements in the Sazliyka and Ovcharitsa river valleys to the Ezero culture claiming that they could be alien as their barrows are located in the vicinity (Panayotov 1991, p. 33, 35).

SEVERAL GENERALIZATIONS AT THE FIRST ANALYSIS LEVEL

1. The following elements of mortuary practices have been found in the regions considered: flat cemeteries and mounds, intra- and extramural, inhumation and cremation, mono- and bi-ritualism, single, double and collective graves, both in flat cemeteries and under/in tumuli; skeletons covered (or not covered) with red/yellow ochre; in grave-pits and placed on the ground/platforms; additional ritual platforms and hearths; “rich” and “poor” graves; simple and sophisticated grave constructions; stone mounds and enclosures, etc. – *i.e.* almost all the elements of the mortuary practices of prehistory. The elements of the local tradition, varying in all of the outlined regions, contradict the uniform imported tradition, that of the “Pit-grave culture”.

2. In literature, the view is that the mortuary practices of the PGC are constituted by the following characteristic elements, which are considered a sign of ethnic and cultural differentiation: primary mound with additional heaping, stable shape and construction of the grave pit (mostly rectangular or with “steps” in the upper part), mats of organic material on the floor, roofing by beams or stone slabs, presence of red ochre, skeleton lying on its back with the lower limbs in different positions. As to grave-goods, they are few or absent. The complex of elements in the Eastern Balkans has been correlated to that of the Northern Black Sea littoral, hence the thesis for the “Lower Danube Variant of the PGC” (Panayotov 1989). Any variation within the proposed scheme is interpreted as a signal of “disintegration” of the tradition, owing to interaction with local traditions in the Balkans. Panayotov’s postulate is widely accepted by his followers. We even find that: “The cultural interrelations between the newcomers – nomad tribes – and the local population are reflected in the perceiving of the local pottery used by the aliens in their practices” (Menkova 2006, p. 27). As if the “Kurgan people” had never used their own pottery before settling in the Balkans! Here we find P. Georgieva’s justified criticism. She casts doubt on the entire thesis of the Lower Danube Variant of the PGC. In her opinion, mound graves were made by the local population, not by the PGC culture. The principle arguments are drawn from a comparative analysis of the grave-goods. The tradition, we read on, was erroneously attributed to the “Pit-grave culture”. Nevertheless it also comes from the steppes, as far back as the “Transition period”, *i.e.* the first half of the 4th millennium B.C. by people of the Khvalynsk culture, which also used pit-graves in their burial customs (Georgieva 1992, p. 345-346). Hence, this is nothing else than a re-dating of the penetration of alien elements, also from the steppes, but merely drawn further back.

Another major conclusion is that at this level of analysis of mortuary practices the picture is so complicated that general principles could hardly be drawn. Elements appear everywhere, at different times and in a different context, which are apparently identical, yet they fall in various combinations and hence have different values and significance. There is such a variety that chaos among our interpretations is easily understandable.

If we go to the next level of analysis – the “second échelon” elements (position, orientation, shape and building peculiarities of the grave pits; number and position of the skeleton[s]; type and position of grave-goods in the pits and in the tumulus; nature of the red-ochre covering; position and specificity of the equipment – platforms, hearths, portable hearths, etc.), we shall find ourselves facing real agnosticism. The examples are sufficiently eloquent; red ochre as powder occurs everywhere in inhumation; graves with “poor” and “rich” inventories are characteristic of all regions with their respective data; orientation of skeletons and pits is absolutely at random; in flat cemeteries (intra and extramural) we find “hocker” skeletons lying on their backs. Sophisticated burial structures and “rich” graves even occur in the Northern Black Sea littoral, that is, in the steppe region which is the kernel of the PGC homeland (Petrenko, Bejlekchy 2006, p. 259-260).

Apparently, the entire set of elements is characteristic for all territories and for all “traditions” for a period lasting longer than a millennium. Each feature occurs in a random combination with a set of others and it is simply impossible to establish any isomorphic system. And what can be said about the mutations of this system throughout time? It seems at first glance that some systematic differences are discernable in the nature of the grave-inventory, yet explanations are greater in number and in directions, so we ought to be very cautious in accepting them.

Could the culture of the Bronze Age in Thrace be seen as a homogeneous phenomenon or should it be considered a mixture of various cultures, based on a variety of economic bases, with a different ethnic and religious face, as it is recorded in funeral customs? This question stems naturally from the above deliberations, as the “heterogeneity” of mortuary practices inevitably stands for heterogeneity of the population, hence leading to a culture consisting of many elements as a whole. This characteristic should reflect other aspects not only of spiritual culture, but also material culture, for instance settlement patterns, subsistence activities, handicrafts and trade. What should be done to ensure that Bronze Age mortuary practices find their place as an integral part of the overall cultural nature of societies? And in general, is such an intention justified? Does it contradict archaeological records? Could the penetration of new elements in the field of religion, such as new mortuary customs, be seen not necessarily as the consequence of the arrival of newcomers (nomads from the steppes in this case)? In other terms, could the migration of ideas and beliefs not be necessarily associated with the migration of their bearers? Or else, are the general changes in the character and level of culture commensurable and synchronous to the changes in mortuary practices?

It is time, therefore, to make the next step: after the thesis of the “Lower Danubian variant of PGC” has been reasonably questioned, we may now raise the question, for many reasons, whether a “PGC mortuary tradition” has ever existed in the territory of present-day Bulgaria. These reasons include the absence of sufficient arguments, the inclusion of a large territory with varied ecological and cultural characteristics without justification, the absence of an adequate analysis and interpretation of mortuary inventory, etc. (Georgieva 1991, p. 5 *sq.*). And, if a “PGC mortuary tradition” has existed, does it really belong to nomadic tribes with its economic and cultural characteristics? Did an exchange of products of animal husbandry against products of agriculture, pottery, etc. in reality took place between the “Kurgan” nomads and local farmers? Would that mean that the “PGC mortuary tradition” thesis should be totally rejected as a diffusionist (migrationist) stage of the development of archaeological thought, and, should this be the case, what could be suggested to replace it? Is there any new scenario sufficiently supported by facts that could sustain criticism for at least some time?

QUO VADIS?

In my opinion, the road which all the researchers cited so far have followed, is at its end. We are in a vicious circle and have all arrived at the level of our own incompetence. The advancement in natural scientific methods and their application would only make the crisis greater, similar to the “reservoir effect” in physics. As Harding mentioned (2000, p. 433), contrary to funerary case-studies, the number of theoretical analyses in this field is small.

If we attempt to analyze the problem from the point of view of the recent studies in the style of the English theoretical school, which emerged on the basis of New Archaeology, I feel that we shall also run into difficulties. The very theoreticians of this school admit that their interpretations could be enriched and further developed. They themselves are in search of new solutions, which would lead to a new view in the reconstruction of a past reality.

Apparently, we are in a situation realized ten years before that, when J. Bintliff asserted (1991, p. 2-4) that the post-Second World War crisis in conventional archaeology is being repeated, moreover, acutely, by the crisis of New Archaeology, processualism and neo-positivism in its hardest variants. According to the same author, the entire *paradigm* (after Kuhn 1962) has to be changed completely and archaeological records should be seen from another position, in order to come out of the crisis. A little earlier, I. Hodder

described the same situation: “Turning up to archaeology, anthropologists would often be surprised to find little interest in their historical questions. Archaeology (from the stage of New Archaeology) [my qualification] had become to a great extent ahistorical” (Hodder 1987, p. vii). In fact, archaeology is separating from history because of the impossibility of arranging synchronous phenomena in one system (as it is in processualism) in short chronological spans, familiar to diachronic (historical) analysis. Bintliff considers that the new way upon structural history is the paradigm of *l'École des Annales*, which has much in common with the New archaeology of the 60s-80s of the 20th c., especially when it deals with phenomena within “*la longue durée*” and the geographical factor involved with social development. “The resulting picture is one in which all the evidence combines across time and space to give us a history in slow motion from which permanent values can be detected. It helps us to rediscover the slow unfolding of structural realities, to see things in the perspective of the very long term”, called “*la longue durée*” (Braudel 1999, p. 21 and n. 1). However, the French historical school also can be attacked: “A ...vital criticism of Braudel’s application of structural history is that he chooses to see the fundamental structures of medium and long-term as geographic constraints and stimuli of the impersonal swings of population history and economic cycles. The world of *mentalités*, of collective ideologies, is little explored” (Bintliff 1991, p. 9, n. 3).

In fact, in order to avoid a direct follow on from the post-processual approach, defended by I. Hodder (1987, p. 1), we have to voice some reservations. The questions asked in his style of description and explanation should be directed towards suitable objects (facts, phenomena or sources); otherwise the placing of an adequate question towards an inadequate subject would be as fruitful as it would be to ask an unsuitable question towards an unsuitable subject. If we scan the examples he provides, we cannot explain why a settlement was abandoned and claim it was due to a general change in the ecology of the region. The fact that a given micro-region had become uninhabitable would provide an answer to the question why all settlements were abandoned, but would not give a satisfactory answer to the question why this specific settlement was abandoned. Respectively the abandonment of a settlement for some specific reason does not mean that the remaining settlements were abandoned for the same reasons. Hence not only should the questions asked be different, they should also be different towards the subjects they are addressed to. In other words, if questions are arranged in a kind of logical order, we should organize sources according to the same order. This reservation, applied to *l'École des Annales*, would lead us to the understanding of time as a flow comprising many an element, where we find phenomena, events and facts of different duration and range, all of them subordinated according to various rules and principles as they are elements of “different worlds” combined altogether in the visible Present. When there are three flows of time, the element which adepts of *l'École des Annales* operate with, there also should exist, accordingly, at least three different mega-systems, which ought to be analyzed not synchronously, but diachronically, and in accordance with their specific laws. Mutation from one structure into another and from one flow to another is one of the most complex problems but it is true not only for the humanities, but also in biology (Bintliff 1991, p. 6, fig. 1.2). The paradigm of *l'École des Annales*, accepted by Dumézil and discussed positively by others in the analysis of Indo-European society and, in particular, religious beliefs, has been summarized as follows: “The first part (of his ‘trifunctional’ structure) is a magic-religious sovereignty, a judicial and religious authority. The second is the force of warriors and the third is production and reproduction” (Hodder 1987, p. 3 with ref.).

Hence, it is not sufficient, going back to our main task, to state the necessity of a new viewpoint, a new methodology and eventually a new paradigm. We also have to undertake a new structuring of archaeological records, if we wish to follow the principle “the right question to the suitable subject”. I take the liberty to quote Propp, who wonders whether the discovery of a general structure (in this particular case, of the miraculous tales) does not indicate the presence of a common source which it comes from. Further on he specifies that if it existed, it should not be sought in the sphere of geography or psychology, rather on the grounds of religion. Any attempt at dating the process itself is a totally different matter (Propp 1928). This is where we should “either seek the assistance of an historian, or the researcher himself should become an historian”. I believe it is early to turn to this phase; therefore I shall only attempt to cast a glance at the structure, without going into the details of its chronological and regional variants.

In my opinion we should above all ask ourselves what we would gain if we draw tradition in mortuary practices on a wider stage, *i.e.* if we associate it with other aspects of religion, on the one hand, and cut it off from the limitations of regionalism and chronology on the other. I feel the suitable framework

would be Europe (without its northernmost parts from Britain to the Urals), however, with Asia Minor in addition, in order to underline its Mediterranean essence. Sources show that it is not possible for a phenomenon, in particular in the sphere of spiritual culture, to cover such an enormous territory entirely and in the same way and time. Therefore, geographically we should seek an interpretation within the framework of major geographic and climatic belts, wider-ranging than Kristiansen's "traditions" (1998, p. 64, fig. 26). In fact, the followers of *l'École des Annales* also operate with these belts, for instance in the case of the Mediterranean as a separate European phenomenon. Chronologically, the subject is determined and leads us towards the Bronze Age, a period outlined after A. Harding (2000, p. 6-20) traditionally *ca.* 2500-800 B.C. for temperate Europe and 3500-1200/1150 B.C. for south eastern Europe and the Balkans.⁴ However strange, we also need a gnoseological limitation here, which should block the temptation to enter into engagement with Indo-European problems, namely pre-homeland, linguistic affinity of dialects, roads and phases of migration, etc. Literature on the question shows that instability about these issues has not decreased, rather the contrary, therefore allowing for an Indo-Europeanization of the matter is, I feel, to be avoided. Instead, it would be better, in my view, to encompass the studies on the material reflection of religious beliefs and rituals.

As I aim at giving a more general picture of the record in tracing religious beliefs, I shall attempt to define a long-term European horizon of common phenomena, roughly covering the 4th-1st mill. B.C., beginning with those which constitute mortuary practices: barrows (long-barrows and other heaping of any shape), grave pits, grave platforms and additional facilities (pits, hearths, ditches, "schlitz-gruben", causeways, etc.); treatment of the body through cremation/inhumation; bi-ritualism; graves of children in settlements; burial of parts of the body or exposure of the body for a long time and burial of the bones only; single, double or collective graves; burial of animals together with the deceased – chiefly dogs and horses; stone mortuary structures; ritual breaking of vessels and objects, placing of grave-goods; grave-houses, grave-wagons and boat-shaped funeral structures; stone- and ditch enclosures of the sacred area and/or henges (designated for funerals, memorial services, depositions or other sacrifices); sanctuary-enclosures; pits for various gifts; ritual hearths, whether portable or not; platforms; stone monuments (stelae), usually depicting armed men; "Schalen-steine" or cup-marks stones; ritual deposition of metal items and pottery; worship of caves and crevices; veneration of rocks; free-standing pillars and columns; open-air peak-sanctuaries; symbols, though we should approach them with caution, as most are *universalia* – labyrinths, different variants of circles, swastika, bowl, hand (thenar) or foot-print representations, etc.

Literature on this phenomenon is enormous and many are the problems subject to research, so we should not expect any case analysis here. It is essential to note that the cited phenomena (and there might be others I have missed) make up a system of variants and mutations regionally and chronologically determined, which is nevertheless beyond and above any archaeological-cultural and ethnical framework. Let us assume that the area called Europe between the 4th and the 1st mill. B.C. contains potentialities of all the elements of what we could refer to as material reflection of a religious doctrine, and in particular the tradition of mortuary practices. This social sphere existed in a period when the movement of time was the slowest and it was not easily subject to change, if change was at all possible. Its development represents part of innovations (perhaps even in the core) described traditionally as the process of Indo-Europeanization of Old Europe (summarized in Gimbutas 1997) – the introduction of the "lethal power of the dagger", the doctrine of the Leader-demiurge, new means of transport, new strategies in stock-breeding as transhumance, long-distance commercial trade, conquest of the mountains, bronze metallurgy, urbanism, writing, etc. The religious beliefs considered to be "Indo-European" are sufficiently well-outlined in literature, so there is no need for me to cite the authors here: the views put forth are axiomatic. Maybe this is the beginning of our "Long-term period" but I refuse to assert it as "Indo-European" in the sense of the notion I used above. I prefer to replace it within a wider context, comparable with that of the "Zeitgeist" phenomenon, rather than within the frame of the traditional understanding of the Indo-European language and culture. Its end could be defined with greater precision, namely the imposition of Christianity, with its eschatology, new divine face and new worlds, new understanding of the individual, family, society, spirit and soul, as well as

4. Terminology and chronology of prehistoric Europe should be equalized anyway and I am not going to enter the swampy ground of this discussion.

freedom. It is more interesting to note that the formation processes could be seen metaphorically in terms of glacial periods and interglacial periods in great climatic cycles. And just as slow climatic change in everyday life is not felt as catastrophic, so are the changes and the new rules. As concerns the understanding of the two remaining time flows (namely that of brief periods of human life, or several generations, and that of the medium-term existence of a local community, or regional traditions in Kristiansen's meaning) the process is almost "invisible". Yet the doctrine exists through them and in them: it could be recorded and studied there; otherwise the tradition will turn into an agnostic *numen* rather than a phenomenon.

Archaeological records allow us to enter into the structure of mortuary tradition, but, in my opinion, so far all the attempts were made at the lowest and mid-range levels – that of the shortest periods of a dozen generations or even the duration of a single human life. This is how specific features inherent for several generations in a given region are recognized (one should say, within the framework of an "archaeological culture"). In other words the external manifestation of the doctrine is established at the level of short periods (episodes of appearance and disappearance), medium-range periods (stable cyclic manifestation), and no one has studied the long-term periods – permanent existence in the entire system. All the records have been attributed to the first two flows of time, nevertheless some of them are higher in rank, others are not, and the picture is no wonder incomprehensible. If we arrange sources according to the scheme offered above, we obtain very interesting results: there are elements in the system of universal importance, with a genesis that could be seen thousands of years back – the grave pit, red (yellow) ochre, etc., others, such as care for the body of the deceased, appear to be a permanent human characteristic. To consider evidence of this rank as archaeological-cultural attributes and to disparage them as elements of short or middle-range periods is to misunderstand the problem. It is true, I believe, for some combinations of them – *i.e.* tumulus/pit-grave/red ochre. They bear information of a rather different class, comparable to the kernel of long-term tradition or even beyond it, and they do not belong to any kind of archaeological culture. Some elements could be considered as belonging to super-long term periods, as they are so steady that they continue into Christianity, forming "paganism" as a sub-stratum in the New Religion. However, this is a task for another study, which is not our goal here.

DISCUSSION

The new paradigm offered here should help us to understand the core of the tradition within the framework of the entire Bronze Age in regions where the model of the PGC-Lower Danube variant was proposed. Once again, we are not talking of "Thracian", "Getic", "Illyrian" or any other ethnic models, as the tradition is seen as part of the religious doctrine beyond any ethno-national features and specificity. Going briefly into details, we could list MBA-LBA evidence coming from the same regions of south eastern Europe:

SE Bulgaria: extramural graves – tumuli and flat cemeteries with inhumation –; with stone structures or without them; tumuli with cremation, bi-ritualism, "rich" and "poor" graves.

NE Bulgaria: tumuli with inhumation, flat cemeteries with inhumation, ritual pits, connected with cemeteries.

NW Bulgaria: extramural burials with cremation.

The Western Rhodopes region and South Western Bulgaria: no cemeteries earlier than the middle of the 2nd mill. B.C. have been unearthed. Later, there were sepulchral mounds with cremation and inhumation, stone structures and rings, ritual pits, etc. In a western direction, up to the Vardar valley, the flat cemeteries with stone structures and inhumations predominate.

The generalised picture allows the identification of several main tendencies:

- a) during the LBA extramural mounds and flat cemeteries remain with inhumation, cremation, bi-ritualism, "rich" and "poor" graves without pits on the platforms, hearths, grave stelae, etc., *i.e.* most of the elements also forming mortuary practices in the same regions in the EBA;
- b) so far no intra-mural burials of children have been found in pits and urns;

- c) so far no cemeteries of the so-called dolmen type (dolmens or cist-type dolmens) earlier than the beginning of the EIA have been studied;
- d) Northwestern Bulgaria appears to be different as only one rite is dominating – cremation in flat extramural graves (cemeteries).

All these remarks, however, are hardly final, considering that the regions have been unevenly studied. For instance, the areas of settlements which have been studied in NE Bulgaria were not large enough to argue that infant intramural graves in general are lacking there. In addition, too small a number of cemeteries have been studied in Northwestern Bulgaria to justify the claim that mortuary tradition is represented only through the cremation ritual, and so on.

The “invasions”, “migrations” and penetrations of new cultural elements could be considered on the scale of the short-time periods (and only rarely of the mid-range periods): they caused some changes at the lowest level of religious beliefs. The mechanism of dispersal of new elements in the sphere of religious beliefs and their adaptation by locals should be viewed through some alternative processes, for instance the practice of pilgrimages or the existence of missionary individuals or even colonies. This is not an “exotic” proposal, I believe, in view of the intensive and regular long-distance trade activities in Bronze Age Europe, which are much more recordable and recognizable. All of these could be the final factor in constructing the tradition of the mortuary practices, as its core should be in relation to the highest level of long-term reality.

Whatever the case, it is clear that throughout the long period from the 4th mill. until the 1st mill. B.C. a tradition dominated since the territories under study the EBA. Its variants were not brought in from outside but rather represent mutations within a pan-European horizon, which, for convenience and because of historiographical *inertia*, could be called “Indo-European”, even though its regional and chronological range is broader. Its specific manifestations in time and space are a wide subject of case-studies and discussion; however, they are rooted in the most conservative spheres of spiritual life.

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THE MARMARA TUMULI

THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO GREEK PROTOHISTORY

Fanouria DAKORONIA *

ABSTRACT

The Marmara Tumuli extended over a vast area in a high mountainous part of Central Greece, on Mount Oeta, which is a branch of the Pindos range, which, in turn, runs from the North to the south of the Greek Peninsula, thus constituting its spine.

The site of Marmara is located in a mountain pass which leads to Aetolia and Doris to the south, to the Spercheios Valley and Thessaly to the north and to Dolopia, Eurytania and Aperantia to the northwest. Recent investigations across this mountainous area have brought to light burial grounds identical to the cist tombs found at Marmara. Where more than one tomb existed they were arranged radially around a hypothetical centre, perhaps an ex-tumulus, the earthen mound of which became less and less visible through the centuries.

Since, however, the new finds are the result of a rescue excavation of short duration in the mentioned area, we also take into account isolated cist graves which display the same characteristics as those of Marmara not only concerning their type but also their burial practices.

According to these graves, spread all over the mountains of Central Greece as described above, one can identify the dead as belonging to pastoral groups moving according to their habits and needs.

Since these groups display no warlike characteristics, since they moved around places linked with the Dorians and the Heraclides and their notorious descendants in the ancient tradition, and since the date of their graves does not match that of the destruction of the Mycenaean Palaces, the deceased were not responsible for that event – if they were the Dorians.

In my experience, derived from long engagement with archaeology, nothing is or can be thought as final concerning the various attempts to fill in the gaps of our knowledge about the history of remote periods, for which the only direct source of information is the archaeological finds. Such is the case of the period between the end of the Bronze Age and the Protogeometric, also called “Submycenaean” period, “Dark Ages”, “Transitional Period”, “Early Iron Age”, etc.

Much discussion has been held about this period and many controversies have arisen so that it is not the author's intention to contribute further on to them with the present article. The only thing that is going to be discussed and stressed here is that more questions on the topic emerge whenever new finds appear.

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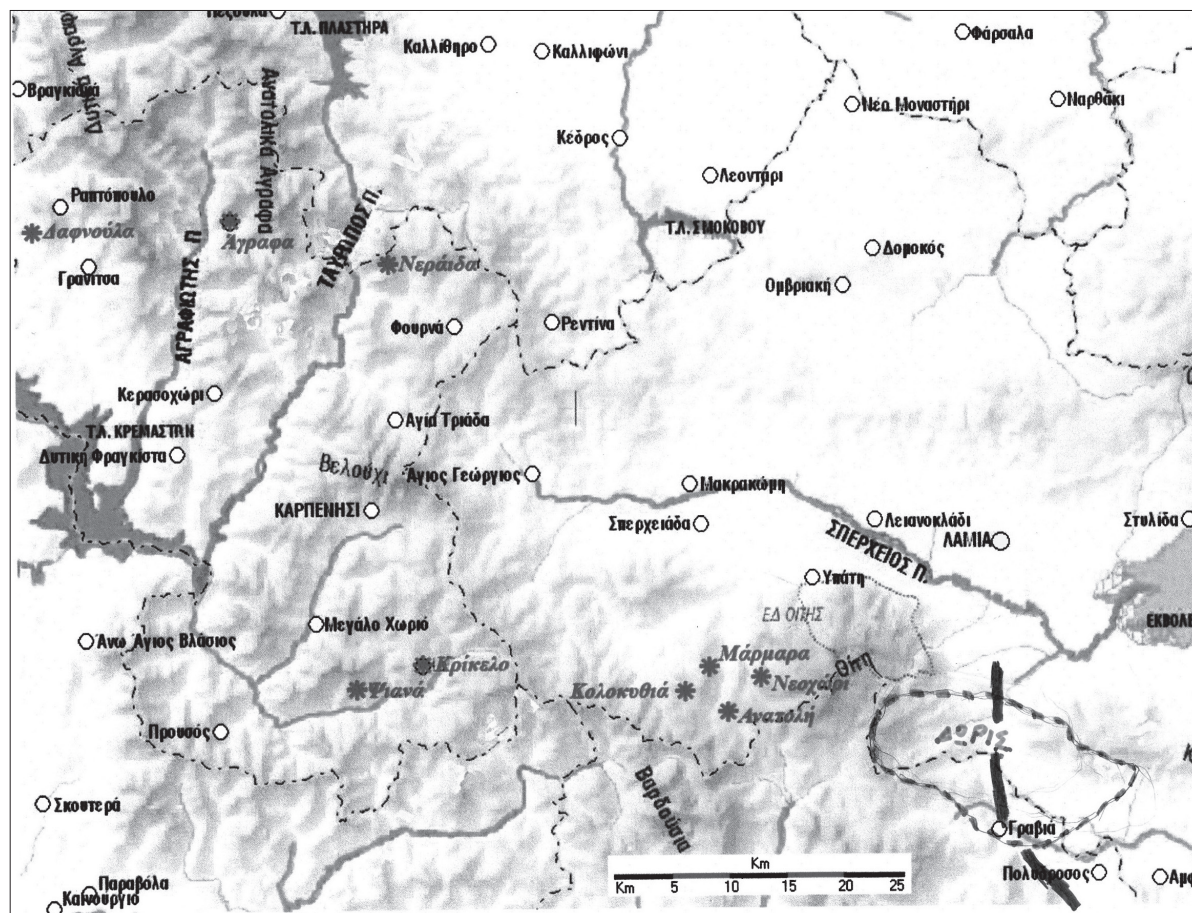


Fig. 1 – Map of the Spercheios valley and the west Oeta mountain range.

Such is the case of a chain of new tumuli and cists spread over a vast area on the mountainous spine of Mainland Greece, namely on the branches of the Pindos range, with a direction from N-NW to S-SE (*fig. 1*).

The tumuli were situated on the small plateau of the west Oeta mountain range,¹ along passages leading from the Spercheios Valley to Doris and Aetolia at a place where the boundaries of the Aenians, the Dorians, the Aetolians and possibly the Oetaeans met. The routes must have been used by the nearby tribes in their communication either with one another or northwards and southwards.²

The tumuli consisted of a kernel of natural rock (*poros*) which was slightly remodelled and covered with sifted earth in order to be used as a family burial ground. They contained cist graves radially arranged around the hypothetical centre of the tumulus.³ This type of tumulus is rare and, in addition to Kaukitsa⁴ in Macedonia, it is to be found only at four places, all of which are in west Oeta: at Marmara, at Kolokythia, at Anatoli⁵ and at Neochori.⁶

The size of the tumuli varies and does not depend on the number of the graves included. An enclosure of large stones around the base of the tumuli appears only rarely.

1. Δακορώνια 1987.

2. Szemler 1991, p. 60-64; Kase 1991, p. 21-45.

3. Δακορώνια 1987, fig. 1-2, pl. 1.

4. Casson 1921, p. 6.

5. Δακορώνια 1987, p. 41-42.

6. Παπακωνσταντίνου 2008, p. 318.

The cists of these tumuli belong to four types:⁷

- Type A is a cist constructed in a rectangular pit dug into the natural rock. Its sides were covered by roughly cut schist slabs which were held upright with the help of rough stones at the corners. Type A cist was the most popular and the most frequently discovered type of grave in this period;
- Type B is a cist again constructed in a rectangular pit but its sides were built in dry-stone masonry;
- Type C is a mixed type, with some of the sides built and some with schist slabs;
- Type D is a twin grave.

Cists of Type B and C are not numerous and during the above mentioned period the twin cists is also extremely rare.

All of the cists were covered by one or two stone slabs. They all had small dimensions and it appears that they could contain a body in contracted position, either on its left or its right side, with the head towards the centre of the tumulus facing the burial gifts.⁸ The position of the pins, earrings and hair-rings attest that the dead were buried dressed and equipped with ornaments.

The soil covering the tumuli was always free of stones or sherds, a sign that the living relatives paid special attention to their dead and sifted the soil, in spite of the fact that the tumuli were not used for a long time and that no funerary ceremonies such as libations, meals or sacrifices took place on the spot.

None of the graves can be characterized as rich since many of them were empty, the others in majority contained one object, usually one vase, rarely more. Apart from pottery the repertoire of the burial gifts consists of some poor, over-used bronze knives, a couple of simple bronze earrings, bronze hair-rings and bronze beads and some clay or lead spindle-whorls.

The pottery is classified in two categories,⁹ wheel-made and hand-made. Hand-made vases are more numerous and their clay is coarse, hard and dark orange-red in colour. The clay of the wheel-made vases is fine, pale in colour with a soapy touch. All vases are coated with diluted clay but show no signs of burnishing.

Only on wheel-made vases can one sometimes detect some kind of linear decoration, easily worn-out.

Concerning shapes, the hand-made pottery repertoire includes cups, ladles, *amphorae*, *kantharoi* and *alabastra* (or pyxides) while the wheel-made pottery includes characteristic *amphorae*, *amphoriskoi*, *askoi* and ladles.

The pottery from these graves displays characteristics of both the Middle Helladic tradition and the Mycenaean repertoire. It seems that the users of these tumuli of mountainous areas belonged to a conservative tribe which had been, to some extent, “mycenaeanized”.

The pottery of the Oeta tumuli is not derived from northern or northwestern centres nor is it related to workshops from further north than Thessaly.

Concerning the metal objects from the graves, none of them is unknown or unusual in the Mycenaean world of southern Greece and Thessaly, nor are the rest of the artefacts which have been collected, such as spindle-whorls.

Cist graves identical with those of the Oeta tumuli described above have been found and excavated to the west and north.¹⁰ The investigation of these cists took place in the frame of short rescue excavations and, due to the lack of time and proper means, it was impossible to excavate an area large enough around them to verify whether they belonged to a tumulus or not. However, the way of construction, the burial customs and the poor burial gifts testify to the same period of use and the same spirit, the same beliefs, if not the same ethnic origin as the users of Oeta's tumuli.

A point that those engaged with the “Dorian question” should bear in mind is that no sign of settlements of any size within a considerable area around both the tumuli and the isolated cists has been found so far.

7. Δακωρώνια 1987, p. 61-67.

8. Δακωρώνια 1987, pl. 117.

9. Δακωρώνια 1987, p. 94-96.

10. Concerning the sites with cemeteries shown on the map, information is available in ΑΔ 34, *Χρονικά* 1979, p. 199; ΑΔ 41, *Χρονικά* 1986, p. 75; ΑΔ 42, *Χρονικά* 1987, p. 238-240; ΑΔ 43, *Χρονικά* 1988, p. 233-235.

Another feature to be underlined is that the people who buried their dead at the above mentioned places did not use cremation. Nowhere was there any kind of *pyra* (pyre). They had no knowledge of iron, nor were they aware of the pottery style development of the time, that is the protogeometric style, and consequently they did not contribute to its evolution.

The question that arises from the archaeological data outlined above is the identity of the people buried there around the second half of the 11th c. B.C. The finds in general correspond better to transhumant nomads¹¹ rather than to warriors-nomads¹² because of the absence of effective weapons among the burial gifts. Similar transhumant nomads still exist in those mountains, the well-known “Sarakatsani”.¹³

The direction of the sites where either tumuli or cist graves have been found run from N-NW to S-SE and perfectly matches up to the hypothetical route of the northwestern nomadic tribes¹⁴ which, according to some theories, were responsible for the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization.¹⁵

The sites of the tumuli border upon ancient Doris, the homeland of the Dorians, whose boundaries can be traced only hypothetically according to ancient literary sources and a few modern investigations of the area. Both sources of information agree that Doris was not a large dominion and only four towns are said to belong to it, according to the majority of the ancient writers.¹⁶ The geographical relief of Doris constitutes an upland area with little arable land, much wood and pastures. It could not, therefore, have supported a population numerous and strong enough to destroy a well organized and powerful civilization such as that of the Mycenaeans.

One should stress that except for a number of sherds ranging from Neolithic to Early Helladic date collected from a site known as Panayia, on the slopes of a fortified acropolis on top of Mount Aetos near the border of Aetolia,¹⁷ no other sign of human presence or activity earlier than the Geometric period has been traced in Doris.

Doris however is crossed by major and minor natural roads which, it is attested, were used throughout antiquity up to the present day. So it is permitted to conclude that Doris’ function was that of intermediate station or meeting point for the various tribes of the Middle-Helladic stock which the tradition later identified as the coming Dorians or the returning Herakleides during their movements southwards or northwards.

The questions, however, remain: Who were the Dorians? Were they, at the beginning of the Iron Age, such an important power that they were capable of changing radically the political, economical and social hierarchy of the Mycenaean world? And if they existed, what was their reason to cross the borders of that world? Was that event the result of a temporary movement or was it a long lasting process, during which tribes gradually penetrated the Mycenaean world and were assimilated – tribes who did not play a major role in the evolution of the life-style of the Bronze Age people but simply profited from it?¹⁸

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MIDDLE HELLADIC TUMULI IN MESSENIAN

ETHNOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS

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ABSTRACT

Spyridon N. Marinatos had foreseen (in his papers in the VII International Congress of Classical Archaeology, Rome 1958, and the 5th Convention of National Committees for the Balkan countries, held in Athens, in 1972 under the auspices of UNESCO) the great importance of the tumuli – mainly of the Middle Bronze Age – and noted the necessity for international collaboration in order to avoid the destruction of the most significant monuments of Balkan prehistory. I believe that these monuments, because of their plan and the burial habits detected in them, substantiate Greek national identity.

The types of tumuli in Messenia and Triphylia, which appear right at the end of the Early Helladic period but actually belong to the beginning of the Middle Helladic world, reveal differences according to the potential of local manpower. It has to be emphasized that the lack of the usual components, where it has been observed, did not result from the destruction of their initial form. They are conical mounds formed by an accumulation of earth, sometimes with a surrounding wall (used as a retaining wall) and stone mantle. The original nucleus was enlarged by the opening of a cenotaph in the middle (Agios Ioannis at Papoulia) or some place around it (Voidokoilia A) and, in the first phase of some of them (Routsi), by the use of burial *pithoi* (occasionally in secondary use), cist-graves or an ossuary (Routsi).

The burial habits attested in these kindred grave monuments in the wider area of SW and W Peloponnese lead us to safe conclusions concerning the indigenesness of the inhabitants. The only different mounds appears to be the pair of MH I tumuli at Kastroulia (east of the Ellinika hill), where the construction of the grave and the burial offerings, including models of fine bronze axes, are unique when compared to all the others.

It is now certain that the oldest tholos tombs on the Greek mainland were erected in Messenia. It is also confirmed that the type of early Messenian tholos covered with a mound derives from the Messenian tumulus of the MH I period, which was used at least during the first two phases of this transitional period, when the Greek nation was being formed. The arrangement of the burial *pithoi* in the tumuli of Agios Ioannis and Routsi, along with the presence of a cenotaph, leads to the safe conclusion that the vaulted burial monuments of the wider region of Messenia (in terms of general form, façade and covering) derive from these tumuli. Moreover, the pottery found among the stones covering the mounds (Voidokoilia) also gives evidence for the existence of local burial habits as well as imports from other pottery production centres.

INTRODUCTION

The tumuli excavated in Messenia, the Balkan Peninsula and Greece, as well as in modern Israel, which are sometimes dated to the Early and more usually to the Middle Bronze Age and have the external form of tholos tombs or multi-tholoi (tumuli with more than one tholos tomb inside), have been the research topic of many scholars, following the first article written by Natan Valmin, “Tholos Tombs and Tumuli”, in *Corolla*

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Archaeologica (1932). Among them was the late Marija Gimbutas who, without considering the extent comparative material and without taking into account the monuments excavated in the 1970s and 1980s in Greece (more have since been discovered after her death at the beginning of the 21st c.), argued, along with N.G.L. Hammond, that Kurgan II and IV people immigrated into the Southern Balkans. However, traces of these populations have not been found in Greece, as is shown in particular by a comparison between the burial practices attested in regions north of Greece and those of mainland Greece.

Alexander Häusler, on the other hand, managed to foresee and recognize the importance of the Middle Helladic tumuli of Messenia and Attica, as well as the indigenoussness of the populations that created them, contrary to the theories of Gimbutas, Hammond and Protonotariou-Deilaki. His position was clear: the Kurgan tumuli were constructed exclusively with earth and not with stones, and were intended to include only one or two burials, that is to say, they were not family cemeteries.

At the VII International Congress of Classical Archaeology, held in Rome in 1958, and at the 5th Convention of National Committees, which took place in Athens, in 1972, under the auspices of UNESCO, Professor Spyridon N. Marinatos pointed out the necessity to confront, by means of international cooperation, the destruction of important prehistoric monuments in the Balkan region, caused by technological progress (bulldozers and loaders, intensive land cultivation), and most particularly the destruction of tumuli. In my opinion, these monuments are actually records of the ethnic identity of the Greeks, considering the time of their emergence.

Spyridon Marinatos also pointed out that excavating those important monuments was a priority. He further argued that this needed to be done within the framework of international cooperation, a task indeed possible to achieve, for instance as has happened with an extended cemetery of tumuli on both sides of the Greek-Albanian border, which was excavated concomitantly by two separate teams. At the same time, other groups of tumuli in Messenia or cylindrical built graves (the R-graves at Steno on the island of Leukas) still await further investigation.

TYPES OF MIDDLE HELLADIC TUMULI IN MESSEANIA

Tumuli were constructed in Messenia, the Argolid, Attica and Boeotia but not in the Cyclades or Crete. In Messenia they first appeared exactly at the end of the EH III period and continued to be used almost until the end of the MH period. The sites they occupied were most usually hill-tops, as at Voidokoilia (tumuli A and B) and Kokorakou, small mounds (Agios Ioannis at Papoulia, Kalogeropoulou at Routsis), hill-sides (Ali Chotza near the village of Platanos), or flat ground (Kastroulia, east of Hellenika hill). In most cases these monuments were truly conspicuous.

Tumuli belong to various types and it is clear that they were enlarged along with the growth of local population and the increased need for burials. They were only a few hundred metres away from each other so we can hypothesize that they belonged to families. This means that each tumulus would have included burials of one family only and the period of use followed the life span of the family members, which could explain the exceptionally short period of use of tumulus A at Voidokoilia (burial *pithoi* 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13). Tumuli generally fall into the following types:

- 1) with a surrounding (retaining) wall and stone mantle, with or without a cenotaph and with burial *pithoi* arranged horizontally and radially. A characteristic example is tumulus A at Voidokoilia (*fig. 1*), dated to the beginning of the MH period. Tumulus B of Voidokoilia, today under the chapel of Prophet Elias, had a stone mantle and burial *pithoi* arranged horizontally and radially, but we do not know whether it had a cenotaph and a retaining wall as it could not be excavated because of the chapel. However, it was surely contemporary with tumulus A and is only 300m away from it;
- 2) with a surrounding (retaining) wall but without stone mantle. Burial *pithoi* are irregularly placed, as in the tumulus at Kokorakou, near Peristeria;

- 3) without surrounding wall and mantle. Examples are the Kalogeropoulou tumulus at Routsimyrsinochori, of medium height but massive enough, as well as the two tumuli (A and B) recently excavated by the 7th Ephorate at Kastroulia (one slightly higher than the other);
- 4) with stone mantle but without surrounding (retaining) wall, such as the earlier tumulus of Agios Ioannis at Papoulia (*fig. 2*), which was enlarged, acquired a cenotaph and two successive stone mantles but not a precinct.

Pithoi were preferably used for inhumations, instead of cist-graves, with the exception of the Kalogeropoulou tumulus at Routsimyrsinochori.

Tumuli usually have no entrance, that is to say, a point of access to their interior. However, we have to keep in mind that tumulus B at Vrana (Marathon) has an entrance at the outer periphery, leading to the single tripartite burial chamber of the monument. We can not be certain of the existence of an entrance in other tumuli (Voidokoilia A and Papoulia) due to later interventions in the southern part of both monuments. Internal cenotaphs, however, had an entrance in a couple of cases: the Kalogeropoulou tumulus at Routsimyrsinochori and the Agios Ioannis tumulus at Papoulia. Therefore, we assume that if a tumulus had a cenotaph, it also had an entrance. Such a cenotaph may have existed in tumulus B of Voidokoilia, under the chapel of Prophet Elias since tumulus A had a similar construction. As for the tumulus at Kalderimi on Kokorakou hill, NW of Peristeria, it was destroyed soon after Spyridon Marinatos' death, so we do not know whether it also had a cenotaph. The mound of Tourkokivoura at Nichoria (Karpophora) should be further investigated, in order to understand the formation of this cemetery of small tholos tombs dated to the end of the MH period.

The height of these tumuli varies. Tumulus A of Voidokoilia is particularly low, especially when compared to tumulus B. In contrast, according to Fritz Schachermeyr's view, the tumulus of Agios Ioannis at Papoulia was made higher when burial *pithoi* were placed on the stone mantle and subsequently covered with earth, a practice that was extended to the whole of the mound.



Fig. 1 – Tumulus A at Voidokilia.



Fig. 2 – Tumulus of Agios Ioannis at Papoulia.

Further similarities of these monuments are: a) the well-known horseshoe shape of the cenotaphs, reminiscent of the apsidal houses of the MH period, b) the apsidal shape of the two constructed graves at the Akones tumulus at Nichoria, c) the horseshoe shape of the tholos tombs at the cemetery on the Tourkokivoura mound at Nichoria, d) the outline of the small tholos tombs “a” and “b” of the tumuli at Gouvalari-Koukounara, which end in a precinct similar to that of the Treasury of Atreus inside the artificial mound covering it.

Other tumuli await being explored: a) at Ali-Chotza, near Platanos village; b) east of the same village, inside a huge pistachio bush; c) at the site of Dapia, east of Gialova – the tumulus was ascertained during the geophysical prospection carried out in 1999 by Prof. Dr Casas (Barcelona) in the framework of a project funded by the European Union; d) at Tourlidi by Pyrgos/Pyrgaki; e) at Katarrachaki, in order to investigate the nature of the mound.

It is absolutely necessary to excavate other MH tumuli, especially in Messenia, in order to explain their formation and to carry out geophysical prospection; to provide us with information about a possible access to their interior (and possibly to the cenotaph). The latter is needed particularly on the Kalogeropoulou tumulus near Routsis.

Further excavation research is advisable for the following sites: 1) the destruction area of tumulus 3 at Kokorakou, at the point between the dromos of tholos tomb 2 of Peristeria and the retaining arch of the tholos tomb 3 of Peristeria; 2) before the entrance of the cenotaph in the Kalogeropoulou tumulus at Routsis; 3) tumulus B at the chapel of Prophet Elias at Voidokoilia, in the area of Meden, east of the Navarino Bay; 4) the centre of the Kaminia mound at Kremmydia and especially between the villages of Gouvalari and Fourtzi (Velanidia).

A geophysical prospection is also advisable for: 1) the Kastroulia tumuli; 2) the site to the west of the mound at Kaminia-Kremmydia; 3) Katarrachaki, near Gouvalari-Koukounara; 4) the Papoulia tumuli; 5) the Kalogeropoulou tumulus at Routsis.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHOICE OF TUMULUS LOCATIONS AND THE USE OF SPACE THROUGH TIME

Of special importance is the fact that the sites where tumuli were constructed, which were usually fertile and strategic, remained in use throughout the centuries:

- 1) tumulus A of Voidokoilia, excavated in the years 1977-1983. It was constructed during the early MH period on a prominent site at the south end of the Agios Nikolaos hill, which is actually the northern end of the Voidokoilia bay, opening to the west, towards the Ionian Sea. The site was inhabited during the Neolithic and EH II period and, after a long interval, was re-occupied at the end of LH I when a tholos tomb (also known as the tomb of Thrasydes, son of Nestor, excavated in 1956, 1976 and 1977) was built inside the tumulus, and again much later, during the 3rd c. B.C., when some kind of ritual for the worship of the ancestors took place;
- 2) tumulus B at Voidokoilia, partly investigated in 1980. It was constructed on the top of the major hill of the Agios Nikolaos area and is located today under the chapel of Prophet Elias, only 300m north of tumulus A. The site has a great view over the surrounding area;
- 3) Kalogeropoulou tumulus at Routsis-Myrsinochori in Pylia, which was constructed in the early MH period at an equally prominent site but not so well visible from the surrounding area. The site was already occupied during the Neolithic and EH II, mostly due to the fertility of the land around it;
- 4) tumuli A and B at Kastroulia, quite close to each other, probably belonging to related families or a single one. Their site lies about 10km NW of Kalamata, east of the Hellenika hill, and was inhabited during the EH II period, as it was suitable for cultivation. The tumuli were constructed in the early MH period and were possibly not visible from the surrounding area;
- 5) tumulus I, of the early MH period, and the renewed tumulus II of Agios Ioannis at Papoulia, built on an artificial mound, visible from quite a distance. The site was previously inhabited, during the EH II and possibly the EH III period as well;
- 6) the tumulus on top of the Kokorakou hill (site called Kalderimi), around 500m NW of Peristeria, visible from quite a long distance. It was also constructed in the early MH period but the site may have been occupied in earlier periods;
- 7) the tumulus at the site called Ali Chotza, near the village of Platania, which has not yet been excavated.

It is relevant that the earliest tholos tombs had similar backgrounds. The one at Osmanaga, modern Koryphasion, yielded pottery of the EH II and MH periods; the tumulus-like mounds at Kaminia-Kremmydia and at Gouvalari-Koukounara and tholos tomb 2 at Routsis also had a MH past, as well as tholos tomb 1 at Viglitsa-Tragana, whose site was occupied in the earlier phases of the Bronze Age.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TUMULI AT THE END OF THE MH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE LH PERIOD

The creation of family cemeteries of small tholoi within a tumulus is obviously very important. We can be certain that the small MH tumuli in Messenia later developed into larger tumuli including small tholos tombs instead of *pithoi*. More specifically, these small tholos tombs were dug into the mound exactly like the burial *pithoi* placed around the cenotaph (either central or not) horizontally, radially and with the mouth facing the outer periphery: at Tourkokivoura, Nichoria, Kaminia-Kremmydia and Gouvalari-Koukounara, the small tholoi are also oriented radially, with their opening or *dromos* facing the periphery of the tumulus that covered them. The two tumuli excavated by Marinatos and two more mounds excavated in 1973-1975 were formed in this way. They are likely to be family cemeteries belonging to the landowners of the region. In case the settlement continued after the initial mound was full of graves, more tholoi were added, like in mound "a"

at Gouvalari. In this mound, the small tholoi are arranged radially, with their entrance or rudimentary *dromos* facing the outer, around a central tholos tomb which may have belonged to the “leader” of the family.

This is also the way in which a cemetery was formed on the top of the Kaminia mound, around two burial *pithoi* and right beside the larger, western tholos tomb, which belonged to a local landowner. To the same list we may also add the cemetery at Tourkokivoura and Akones, near the large tholos tomb of Nichoria, as well as that of Analepsis at Vourvoura, Kynouria. All these examples share a common feature: the fact that members of the local society living in the neighbouring settlements were in a position to build their personal burial monuments (small tholoi under a tumulus) at a small distance from the larger and richer tholos tombs of the local landowners.

Hence, we reach the conclusion that the tholos tombs built under tumuli are the plausible evolution of the burial *pithoi* of the preceding period and are related to them in form and function. Monuments of this kind greatly contribute to our understanding of the origin of the vaulted tomb in a circular tumulus of the MH period in Messenia. And it is precisely this similar arrangement of burial *pithoi* in a tumulus and tholoi under a common mound that expresses the identity of the populations in the MH and LH periods, and their relationship.

Also of interest is the fact that, at the end of the MH period, cemeteries adopt the general form of the earlier MH tumuli. Thus we can conclude that the inhabitants of the late MH settlements are not ethnically different or distant from those of the early MH. Of course, it is advisable to collect anthropological material and in particular whole teeth which can be analyzed in the laboratory. The cemeteries offering such data are: 1) Tourkokivoura at Nichoria-Karpophora, 2) Kaminia at Kremmydia 3) the tumulus-like mound “a” at Gouvalari-Koukounara.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BURIAL THOLOS UNDER A MOUND

As we have learnt from the resuming of the excavation at the tumulus of Agios Ioannis-Papoulia in 1980, as well as at the Kalogeropoulou tumulus at Routsy-Myrsinochori in 1989, the mouth of the burial *pithoi* had a threshold (slab), lintel (one or more slabs), *antae* on both sides and a pair of covering slabs, so as to close it completely. Furthermore, the more recently discovered and investigated burial *pithoi* nos. 19 at Agios Ioannis and 2 at Routsy look similar, with a lintel over the mouth, *antae* on both sides and a threshold underneath.

This form of the *pithos* mouth, therefore, quite resembles the façade of a tholos tomb, with lintel and *antae*, sometimes even with piles of ashlar slabs at the mouth (Kakovatos and Peristeria).

To sum up, the form of the vaulted burial monuments covered with a mound exactly corresponds to that of the preceding MH tumulus in Messenia, from which it actually derives. Both the MH tumulus and the tumulus over a tholos are circular; more specifically the façade of the tholos tomb resembles that of the burial *pithos* mouth, especially those at Kalogeropoulou and Agios Ioannis. However, we still do not know what the façade of the burial *pithoi* at Voidokoilia tumulus B and of those at Kokorakou looked like.

It must also be noted that the exterior of the underground chamber is horseshoe shaped because the circular burial chamber is linked to the front opening, although this does not show under the circular covering of the mound. This recalls the shape of the central, more developed cenotaph of the later tumulus (phase II) at Agios Ioannis-Papoulia.

CONTINUITY OF USE OF THE SITE – HOMOGENEOUS BURIAL CUSTOMS

In all the cases mentioned above there is discontinuity in the occupation of the sites, perhaps only due to a lack of evidence. This indicates (but does not prove) the establishment of one or more ethnic groups for a short time or continuously from the Neolithic to the Mycenaean period, probably because the strategic importance of this area would prompt any population to choose it to establish their family cemetery.

Moreover, the identity of the ethnic group (or groups) that were installed there is ambiguous, as is the period during which they occupied the sites of the Messenian tumuli (either periodically or for many

centuries or even millenniums). The survival of small homogeneous ethnic groups was hardly possible in the conditions of the time. In addition, it is difficult to accept the idea that people arriving sporadically chose to live on the sites where the tumuli were already constructed.

On the basis of the available data and with the prospect of new evidence becoming available in the future, it should be considered certain that the same population groups inhabited those sites. From an ethnological point of view, this issue is of great importance because in most cases (apart from that of Kastroulia) the pottery found in the mounds resembles the Messenian pottery in each period. On the other hand, it should be pointed out that the use of burial *pithoi* is attested from the EH II period onwards at Steno on Leukas, at Pelikata, Strefi and elsewhere (in Neolithic Thessaly, at Kephala, in Asia Minor and the east Aegean islands) and it is clearly common in western and south western Greece.

The date of the tumuli (20th-17th c. B.C.), the burial practices (type of monument, use of burial *pithoi*, and more rarely, of cist-graves), as well as the grave offerings, a great number of which obviously came from Aegina and generally from the east Peloponnese, prove the indigenesness of these groups and, at the least, the existence of trade around the Peloponnese, exactly like in the preceding EH II period.

When E. Protonotariou-Deilaki wrote her Ph. D. "The tumuli of Argos" (1981), I had stressed that ethnic elements could be detected on the basis of the tumulus shape, the burial habits and, in particular, the grave offerings, with special mention of the vases from the tumulus at Aphidna, north of Marathon. It is actually a peculiar group of vases, not attested at other sites and most probably produced by some local or nearby pottery workshop. These pots, along with some imported ones, attest the presence of an ethnic group which we may be able to identify in the future as one of those mentioned in the ancient Greek sources.

Therefore, we should apply a similar method to the relevant documented cases of tumuli in Messenia, even without written sources. The tumuli excavated during the second half of the previous century presented undoubted similarities, on the basis of which I had put forward the hypothesis that they had certainly belonged to a Mediterranean group (or groups) and not to newcomers from the Northern Balkans or eastern Europe.

Tumuli A and B of Kastroulia, uncovered by Dr Joerg Rambach at the beginning of the new century, are quite different. They contained large quantities, by MH standards, of Minyan pottery, especially *amphikypella* cups belonging to a peculiar type but resembling in technique and, occasionally, in size vessels found in Southern Italy (Paestum Museum). In any case, the difference from the *amphikypella* cups already found in other tumuli, graves and settlements of the MH period in Messenia (or even of the transitional MH-LH and early LH period) is indicative of a distinct manufacture technique. At the same time, the discovery of small copper models of double axes placed on the breasts of the bodies (mainly women's) indicates burial practices obviously not known from other contemporary burials.

It is therefore up to Dr Rambach to elucidate this recently attested use of models of double axes in Messenia, a practice also known in Bulgaria and various sites of Northern Greece and the Balkans. Dr Rambach has been very kind in showing me the complete collection of his finds at the Kastroulia tumuli and I believe that he will investigate the origin of this very early example of burial so as to have ethnological conclusions and answer the question of whether or not this ethnic group comes from northern Greece.

In any case, arbitrary maps that were published in 1981 in the book of Sibylle von Reden and Jan G.P. Best *Auf der Spur der ersten Griechen. Woher kamen die Mykenen?* (to the subtitle I answer very simply, "von zu Hause") do not reflect archaeological evidence because the cultural data of the Neolithic, Early, Middle and Late Bronze Age clearly indicate indigenous creation, development and survival within the framework of native ethnic groups.

Apart from these, it is worth mentioning that there are also signs of homogeneity in the tumuli of Messenia. To be more specific, the *amphikypellon* cup itself, a double vase that was used for libations, offers an actual proof of undisturbed continuity from the MH to the LH world. It is found at the beginning of the MH period in the Voidokoilia tumulus, inside the cenotaph of the Kalogeropoulou tumulus, in the burials of the Kastroulia tumuli, on the acropolis of Malthi, on the supposed "altar" at Nissakouli-Methoni, in the MH tomb 1 of Kephlovryso at Volimidia (two groups), in the surroundings of the MH III/LH I settlement on the Epano Englianos hill, in the possibly MH context of the tholos tomb at Tourliditsa, in

the earliest tholos tomb of mainland Greece, Koryphasion, dating to the end of the MH, in the MH III/LH I East House of Peristeria and in the contemporary apsidal house at Katarrachaki. We can conclude, therefore, that this peculiar vessel covers the whole of the MH period and continues until the beginning of the LH.

In order to find out what these vessels contained during libations, it would be necessary to proceed to chemical analysis. However, all these vases were found intact so they should not be partly destroyed or even scraped for analysis. What we know from the Homeric tradition is that these *depata amphikypella* were possibly replaced by others made of gold and were, therefore, more precious than the other MH pots. Their use for libations over burial monuments is attested by individual burials (six *depata* in the neighbouring early MH tomb 1 at Kephallivryso, one at the tholos tomb of Koryphasion), in the cenotaph, or common grave, of those buried in a tumulus (Kalogeropoulou tumulus, perhaps also Voidokoilia tumulus A, where *depas amphikypellon* was found in 1977 possibly from a destroyed (?) cenotaph or from *pithos* no. 1 which had been moved and emptied). The vessel found at Tourliditsa may be connected to an earlier tumulus, an assumption that has to be investigated by further excavation around the tholos tomb, under the floor of the burial chamber and *dromos*. All these examples constitute the southern group. Moreover, at the bottom of burial *pithos* 3 of the Aphidna tumulus, a composite triple vessel was found, for which we do not know whether the individual parts were connected with each other.

There is also a northern group of *depata amphikypella*, isolated and dispersed in various areas such as former Yugoslavia (Dobraca), Albania (the tumulus between the villages of Prodani and Rehova in SE Albania), Epirus near the Greek-Albanian border (tumulus B of Meropi at Pogoni, in the valley of Gormos), and the R-graves at Steno on Leukas (grave R 10c and grave R 27/27a). Undoubtedly, there are more to be found at Steno and, possibly, in Albania.

These specimens are enough to show, above all, loose relationships between the local groups of this wide geographical area and the Proto-Mycenaeans and Mycenaeans of Messenia (from Voidokoilia to Malthi and from Epiano Englianos and Volimidia to Tourliditsa). Messenia, which was densely inhabited by small towns and farms, presupposes similar burial practices among the local populations and similar social organization and kinship, all due to the particularly fertile land and abundant sources of water.

Hence, all the double vases (*depata amphikypella*) found in tumuli and settlements indicate homogeneity in the corresponding burial practice and the same way of thinking. In short there are all the necessary conditions for us to accept ethnic kinship of the population in all these areas of Messenia. The only element left for investigation is the origin of use (by an indigenous or non-indigenous population) of small models of double axes at Kastroulia during the early MH period.

UNEXCAVATED TUMULI IN MESSEANIA

Considering other possible tumuli in Messenia, it should be mentioned that the monument cited by W.A. McDonald and R. Hope Simpson at Koukougera of Englianos/Chora is neither a tumulus nor a tholos tomb. After the gradual destruction of this mound over the years by its owner, it appeared that it did not cover any kind of burial structure.

However, in any case, the following monuments, considered to be tumuli, should be investigated by geophysical prospection and excavation. In several of these cases, there are reports by locals that the mounds have been formed in the last few decades by the accumulation of stones from various spots on the holdings:

- a) very close to the tumulus of Agios Ioannis at Papoulia and, more specifically, at the site of Kouskouras, only 100m away, where there is an accumulation of earth and stones;
- b) in the area between the villages of Platanos and Papoulia, east of Platanos, at the site of a huge pistachio bush;
- c) at Kaldamou, property of I.S., where there is accumulation of earth and stones;
- d) Tourlidi at Pyrgaki, etc.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Above-ground burial monuments dating to the EH and MH periods (apart from the vaulted tombs at Chalandriani and the tholoi of Crete) like the R-graves, the mounds of Ampheion (Thebes), Asine, Dendra, Aphidna, Vrana (Marathon), Thorikos, Kaminia, Kissos-Chandrinis, and the unpublished late Mycenaean tumulus at Monastiraki in the Argolid, all indicate: (a) the loose, though palpable relationship between the local populations of the above mentioned areas, which all created tumuli as family cemeteries; (b) the general similarity of the tumulus and tumulus-like monuments. It also points to the necessity of future research to understand the chronological evolution of tumuli and classify the various kinds of offerings according to their origin and significance within the burials. In this way we may reach conclusions of an ethnological nature about local demographic units.

A DNA investigation, based on samples of teeth coming from skeletons found in tumuli, started in October 2004 at the initiative of Professor George Stamatogiannopoulos, of the Washington University in Seattle, who contacted me and selected samples from the Museums of Ancient Olympia and Chora only, due to the high cost of this research. This project's chief aim was to investigate the MH skeletal material, so as to create a data bank including basic and representative information about the period of origin of the subsequent Mycenaean population. Hopefully, with continuing research we will be able to gather comparative material and apply a statistical method to support the results concerning the grave offerings found in tumuli.

THE EH-MH ABOVE-GROUND CYLINDRICAL GRAVE CONSTRUCTIONS AT THE SITE OF STENO, AT NYDRI ON LEUKAS

I would like to point out that the above-ground cylindrical graves of the EH-MH period at Steno on the island of Leukas are not tumuli but simply family tombs, placed next to each other and without a substantial approach corridor, even within their midst. They are not built on prominent sites, that is, they are not burial monuments to be seen from a distance. Moreover, their representation by W. Dörpfeld seems to me extremely problematic and hypothetical.

Their form was not originally conical and they were not formed from an accumulation of earth. Earth was only occasionally piled up and even then only to cover the *pithoi* or the cist-graves opened in the area. I hope that the DAI (German Archaeological Institute at Athens) will submit a demand to continue the excavation in order that a close observation of the stratigraphy reveals the nature of the upper part of each monument. In contrast, tumulus no. 1 at Orah (eastern Adriatic, height 1.40m and diameter 17m), which is dated to the local EBA, was formed more or less in the same way as the tumuli at Vrana (Marathon). However, it was definitely covered with a conical accumulation of earth and it had two superimposing cist-graves in the middle. The tumulus, therefore, was formed above the stone nucleus which had a diameter of 8.50m.

ETHNOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS

Unfortunately, in none of the cases mentioned above has a settlement or a farm been located which was possibly connected to any of the excavated tumuli and we have no parallels from settlements for the pottery recovered from the tumuli. That is to say, we do not know whether similar vessels were used at both the tumuli and settlements of the same period, as we are ignorant of the exact dating of the *depata amphikypella* found in several of the northern tumuli.

The life span of the tumuli varies; however, it does not extend, in general, to many decades or more than one century, as can be judged from the number of burials, the pottery and the offerings as a whole. Therefore, even if tumulus A of Voidokoilia had nine burial *pithoi* outside the tumulus precinct, two burials in the eastern sector, an enclosed stone grave of a man at the south, more than one burial in several graves (burial *pithoi* nos. 5, 6, 4) and an uncertain number of burials in *pithoi* nos. 13, 10, all in all, the use of the tumulus by a local family, should cover, at most, the MH I period. The existence of a cenotaph in the centre of the tumulus is likely but not absolutely certain. It may have been destroyed by the construction of the so-called Thrasymedes tholos tomb, at the end of the 16th c. B.C. The origin of the early matt-painted *depas amphikypellon* may have been, as mentioned above, similar to the origin of the matt-painted *depas amphikypellon* found in the Kalogeropoulou tumulus at Routsis.

Regarding tumulus B of Voidokoilia, due to the chapel of Prophet Elias, nothing is known about the number of burials and the period of use. All we have is a burial *pithos*, looted several decades ago, including one burial and an incised sherd of the MH I period (1980 excavation season), showing that its use goes back at least to the MH I period. As was also the case with the similarly early tumulus at Routsis, we cannot be certain that it did not have a cenotaph which might lie under the floor of the chapel, although the illegal digging during the 1980s did not reveal any such evidence.

The Kalogeropoulou tumulus at Routsis should be examined by geophysical prospection and further excavation should be carried out in front of the cenotaph in order to determine the organization of the area and the access to the cenotaph. This tumulus, though without a stone mantle and a retaining wall, appears to be the best organized of all. It also had a cenotaph, which was used for libations offered to the dead, as well as burial *pithoi*, of which one was used for child burial, cist-graves and even an ossuary (Ioannis Stamatakos). Its use lasted for a few decades only and its burials were all found without offerings. Thus it is the only tumulus in Messenia without pottery at all.

Tumuli A and B of Kastroulia are exceptional because of their aspect as they are obviously higher than the others. Basically, they included a small number of burials and may have belonged to two families of the same group. The techniques used on the numerous vases and the nature of the offerings indicate, on one hand, a peculiar pottery workshop, and on the other, the autonomy of the site regarding burial practices. A problem which still remains unanswered is whether there was continuous occupation of the site after the EH II period, as is suggested by the great number of EH II sherds on the ground surface and in the filling of the tumuli, because there is no evidence for the occupation of the site in the transitional EH III phase.

The superimposing of tumuli I on tumuli II at Agios Ioannis indicate an increase of the number of the family members which had formed the initial tumulus, supposedly at the beginning of the MH period. Here the same problem arises as at the tumuli of Voidokoilia, Kokorakou, Kastroulia and the Koryphasion tholos tomb: was the site always inhabited by the same ethnic group? The small cist-graves are also problematic, as they could possibly be used as personal ossuaries for the burials of the MH period.

Finally, regarding the Kokorakou tumulus, we cannot estimate the factors of its formation and use, because it was unreasonably destroyed by its owners after its excavation (1964), which could not be resumed in the framework of the second excavation campaign of the Athens Archaeological Society at Pylos-Messenia (since 1973). A simple survey of the site took place and most of the sherds of the burial *pithos* excavated by Marinatos were collected, thanks to the efforts of the loyal guard of Peristeria, Georgios Panagitsas.

Several questions arise, concerning whether there was any earlier occupation of the site from the EH II period onwards, whether there were more burials in the tumulus, whether there was a cenotaph, if there were other types of burials apart from *pithoi*, if there was an ossuary, or even if the tumulus was connected to the Karageni hill, south of Peristeria, only 500m away, where the main MH settlement of the area was located.

The Kokorakou tumulus also belongs to an early phase of the MH period, as is shown by a sherd of a fine black Minyan cup and the rim of a black Minyan open vase. Further excavation may bring to light evidence of graves lying deeper.

Child burials are very rare in all these tumuli and, of course, there may have been many more that were not noticed during the excavation or were destroyed in earlier periods. The three known child burials were located at the periphery of the tumuli at both Routsis and Agios Ioannis.

Finally, we have to note that the burial monument at Kato Samikon was not a tumulus, but a grave circle, while the one at Makryisia was a tholos tomb.

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THE (POSSIBLE) TURSI TUMULUS BURIAL NEAR MATERA AND THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOUTHERN ITALY AND THE AEGEAN-BALKAN AREA IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 3RD MILLENNIUM B.C.

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ABSTRACT

The author discusses the presence, in the Italian peninsula, of the principal elements (besides the kind of funerary structure) generally considered, under the traditional hypothesis, to be linked to the tumuli cultural world between the second half of the 4th millennium and the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C.: that is, the use of the horse; wagons; hammer-axes and mace-heads; anthropomorphic stelae; corded ware; hammer- (or T-) headed pins. He proposes two phases of weak contacts with that cultural world, with some differences between central and Southern Italy, ascribing the (possible) Tursi tumulus to the context of the second phase.

First of all, I would like to recall some of the cultural aspects of the groups which used burial mounds before 2500 B.C., according to the traditional hypothesis (Gimbutas' ideas were recently reviewed by J. Marler 2001; see also Anthony 1986; Anthony 1990), which I do not discuss but instead use as a general background. According to Harrison and Heyd (2007, p. 193-203) Gimbutas' theory of three invasions finds little support but they do not rule out the possibility that from 4500 B.C. people of steppe origin from the western Pontic area were settling in the plain of the lower Danube and the central Carpathian basin and that a migration had just taken place in the third phase (first half of the 3rd millennium B.C.). I do not like the term "migration" for use in the prehistoric context, preferring "movement of small groups", but I accept most of their proposals, including the possibility of cultural contacts between the Balkan and Pontic areas before 3000 B.C.

I aim to identify those eastern elements and assess at what point they can be attested in the Italian peninsula, or better still in southern and Central Italy, excluding northern Tuscany, which is closely related to Northern Italy in this period. However, the eastern part of Northern Italy could have had a specific history.

The principal elements generally taken into consideration in the traditional hypothesis (some of them mentioned also by Harrison and Heyd 2007, p. 196-197), besides the tumulus funerary structure, are:

- use of the horse;
- wagons;
- hammer-axes and mace-heads;
- anthropomorphic stelae;
- corded ware;
- hammer- (or T-) headed pins.

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Before dealing with the possible tumulus near Tursi (Matera, Southern Italy: Cremonesi 1976), I examine the earliest presence of the other elements in the Italian peninsula in order to discuss their relevance and the possibility of independent histories from similar elements in North-Western Italy.

USE OF THE HORSE

Finds of horse bones are lacking in Southern Italy before the Bronze Age. The ritual burial of a horse found near the Copper Age settlement at Le Cerquète, north-west of Rome, dates back to the second half of the 4th millennium B.C. (Curci, Tagliacozzo 1994). The absence of horse bones in the settlement



Fig. 1 – Principal Italian sites mentioned in the text. 1: Remedello di Sotto; 2: Conelle di Arcevia; 3: Berbentina di Sassoferrato; 4: Osimo; 5: Guardistallo; 6: Rinaldone; 7: Maccarese-Le Cerquète (Fianello settlement and site H); 8: Cantalupo Mandela; 9: Gricignano di Aversa; 10: San Severo; 11: between Bovino and Castelluccio dei Sauri; 12: Torre del Lupo; 13: Mirabella Eclano; 14: Gaudio; 15: Tursi, contrada Pane e Vino; 16: Capo Alfiere. The broken line arrows indicate possible (indirect?) cultural contacts with the tumuli groups around 3500 B.C.; the continuous line arrows indicate possible (indirect?) cultural contacts with the tumuli groups in the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C.

itself, as in other contemporary settlements of the Italian peninsula (excepting two teeth from Berbentina di Sassoferrato, a Copper Age settlement in the Marche region, and two remains from a survey near Le Cerquete, site H, with Copper Age pottery: Azzaroli 1979; Peroni 1989, p. 128; Ruffo 1993), could be due to its symbolic meaning and/or its not being used as an item of food consumption. Horse remains were mentioned for the Copper Age tombs unearthed at Cantalupo Mandela, east of Rome (Sergi 1912). Also, in the contemporary settlement of Conelle di Arcevia, in the Marche region, horse bones are lacking, but some antler elements similar to those sometimes interpreted as bits (Dereivka: Telegin 1986; a recent discussion on eastern European data about early horse riding in Anthony *et al.* 2006) were found (Cristiani, Fecchi 2003, p. 436, pl. 11, 1, 4; 13, 3). The wear analysis of the Conelle artefacts (Cristiani, Fecchi 2003, p. 445, 460-462) does not confirm this hypothesis, but in my opinion it cannot at all be ruled out. In any case, the horse from Le Cerquete does not seem to be related to the central European contacts of Northern Italy and Northern Tuscany, where the first traces of horse date back to the second half of the 3rd millennium B.C. (Corridi, Sarti 1989-1990).

WAGONS

It seems to me that the first traces of cart tracks in peninsular Italy were recognized by the Marzocchella excavations at Gricignano (Campania region), dating back to a moment immediately following the Agnano Monte Spina volcanic eruption, around the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. (Marzocchella 1999, p. 122, n. 50, fig. 17). The evidence of wagons in eastern European contexts at least from the second half of the 4th millennium is well-known (Sherratt 1981; Sherratt 1987; Morgunova, Khokhlova 2006). It cannot be ruled out that the introduction of the use of wagons drawn by cattle in Southern Italy was earlier, as the ard marks dating back to the 4th-early 3rd millennium could indicate (Marzocchella 1998, p. 113; Giampaola *et al.* 2007; Laforgia *et al.* 2007; Nicosia *et al.* 2007).

HAMMER-AXES AND MACE-HEADS

Even if hammer-axes have a long history in continental Europe (Zapotocky 1992), their use develops in Italy at a specific moment (from the second half of the 4th millennium; an isolated earlier presence, for example, at S. Maria in Selva, Marche region: Cazzella, Silvestrini 2005, fig. 4, A1) and their distribution (in particular the articulated type, generally found in funerary contexts) is concentrated in Central Italy (Carrisi 2003; Dolfini 2004, p. 192-195).

Evidence is scanty but the route of diffusion of hammer-axes (and probably mace-heads too: Dolfini 2004, p. 196-197) in the Italian peninsula could be similar to that of the horse, via the Adriatic or, avoiding the sea crossing, via the Venezia Giulia region, where some hammer-axes were found. They seem not to be of articulated shape and their chronology is uncertain (from the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age) but Copper Age funerary findings are lacking in that region: according to a recent study the raw materials used to manufacture the specimens from Venezia Giulia region generally are of Balkan provenance (Montagnari Kokelj *et al.* 2006).

ANTHROPOMORPHIC STELAE

I do not aim to deal with the complex problems associated with the anthropomorphic stelae found in Northern Italy, which are outside the area under consideration. Also, the specimens found in eastern Liguria and north-western Tuscany are probably related to the continental European world. A set of anthropomorphic stelae found between Bovino and Castelluccio dei Sauri, in the Apulian Subapennine,

and another case from Gargano (Torre del Lupo) are geographically isolated at the moment (Tunzi Sisto 1999a; Nava 1993, p. 104, n. 6). They are both of small dimensions, and have been ascribed to the Copper Age by A.M. Tunzi Sisto because of the type of dagger engraved on them. Two trial trenches carried out at Sterparo by Tunzi Sisto herself (1999b) unearthed some problematic stone structures: a fragmentary flat stone had been vertically inserted into one of them but its interpretation as a part of an anthropomorphic stele is not entirely secure. Piano Conte-Malanotte pottery was found in both trenches, allotted to the Early Copper Age of the first half of the 4th millennium B.C., a very early date for an Italian anthropomorphic stele with a dagger representation. In any case, the problem of their area of origin is not easy to solve. The other Italian areas with anthropomorphic stelae are distant; the eastern transmarine contexts are even further away but the last one could be an interesting hypothesis to be explored. A connection with the stelae from Bulgaria (Todorova 1995, p. 91; Bailey 2000, p. 250) is very problematic; a connection, probably mediated, with the well-known stele from Troy I (Blegen *et al.* 1950, p. 155-157, pl. 190) is difficult but perhaps not impossible. Another stele was found at Souphli Magoula, in Thessaly (Seferiades 1985, p. 237, n. 2).

CORDED WARE

Obviously, I do not take into consideration the few Italian contexts where this kind of pottery is linked to the Beaker phenomenon. The only possible case of corded ware independent from it, that I know of, is a vessel found in Southern Italy at Capo Alfieri (Calabria region: Marino 1992-1993, p. 63, n. 160, pl. 22, 6): its shape and decorative pattern seem to be different from the Beaker pottery. Potsherds of it come from nine different contexts at the site, so the very low ¹⁴C date (3500±60 B.P. = early 2nd millennium cal. B.C.: Salerno, Vanzetti 2004, p. 221) attributed to the vessel is not firmly associated with it. In any case, its pertinence to the 3rd millennium B.C. Corded Ware phenomenon and particularly its connection with the western Balkan or Aegean finds of this kind is problematic (Hood 1973, p. 59-60; Čović 1989-90; Tasić 1995, fig. 30, 3, 4; Malamidou 1997, fig. 11).

HAMMER-HEADED PINS

Pins were not generally used in Italy during the Copper Age. The silver pin from Remedello (Northern Italy) could be linked to similar copper and bone artefacts from Switzerland and southern France (de Marinis, Pedrotti 1997, p. 286), but its raw material is problematic: Barfield (1996, p. 71) thinks the use of silver was Aegean in origin. The only bone hammer-headed pins in peninsular Italy were unearthed from some tombs of the eponymous Gaudio cemetery, near Paestum (tombs II, IV, IX, XIII, in a marginal = late? position: Bailo Modesti, Salerno 1998, p. 140, fig. 59, 450A and fig. 76). In this case, rather than thinking about Switzerland or France, a connection with the Aegean models is not impossible, even if at the moment the Aegean contexts seem to be later (Asea, Lerna, Troy, Poliochni: Holmberg 1944, fig. 121, 16; Blegen *et al.* 1950, p. 376, pl. 125,7; Caskey 1956, pl. 47b; Bernabò Brea 1976, p. 295, pl. 237, 2). The bone or metal hammer-headed pins are rare in the Mediterranean and the distance between Paestum and Northern Italy or Switzerland is not so great as between Paestum and the Aegean. The alternative hypothesis of provenance, however, should not be refused. In the area of the north Caucasus this type could be linked to women's tombs (Primas 1996, p. 148-149), but the aforementioned Remedello individual is a male: the sex of the individuals with hammer-headed pins at Gaudio is unknown. Bone specimens of the Yamnaya culture in the Caucasus dating back to late 4th - 3rd millennium B.C. at the Hermitage Museum have a rounded tip (see Childe 1957, fig. 78, 5, 6); in Iran and central Asia (Lombardo 2007, fig. 3) during the late 3rd-early 2nd millennium a similar metal artefact is interpreted as a stick for cosmetics. The small bone tubes containing pigments from the 3rd millennium Aegean (one similar to

them was found near San Severo, in northern Apulia: Gravina 1982, pl. 4, 2) could have been used in a similar manner (Papathanassopoulos 1981, p. 142, fig. 70; La Rosa 1997, p. 130, n. 101; Cazzella 1999, p. 398-399, n. 11).

THE (POSSIBLE) TUMULUS BURIAL NEAR TURSI

Some years ago M. Primas, publishing the results of the excavations at Velika Gruda (Montenegro), took into consideration the cist tomb found near Tursi (Primas 1996, p. 124). She suggested it was a tumulus burial, even if traces of a tumulus were not recognized during the excavations. Primas' hypothesis seems to me to be very interesting. It could be one of the rare cases of Copper Age tumulus burial in Southern Italy (the tumuli unearthed near Salve, in the Salento peninsula, seem to be later: Ingravallo 2007), probably dating back to the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. Moreover, in the original publication of the tomb little importance was given to the burial of a child (Cremonesi 1976, p. 111-112): this could be the result either of a kin link with the principal inhumation or of a human sacrifice.

As highlighted by Primas, the features of the stone cist at Tursi for just one individual (or at least just one with rich grave goods) and its possible isolation make it more similar to the Velika and Mala Gruda tumulus burials than to Steno in Leukas. Despite the aforementioned small bone tube found at San Severo probably originating in the Ionian Islands, which indicates cultural contacts with them, the model of the Tursi tumulus burial could have arrived in Southern Italy from the eastern Adriatic coast. In any case, the majority of the grave goods from the Tursi cist seem to be local in origin and typical of the Laterza culture. The major difference in comparison with other Laterza tombs, single pit graves included, besides the structure, is the abundance itself of grave goods. The author who published the Tursi tomb, G. Cremonesi (1976, p. 123-125), also highlighted its affinities with the Gaudio culture and particularly the "Capo Tribù" rock cut tomb of Mirabella Eclano (Onorato 1960), in inland Campania. However, this one also distinguishes itself from other Gaudio culture tombs as regards the abundance of its grave goods.

I do not rule out that this was the principal social feature transmitted by the tumulus burial ideology, which had a local reworking at Tursi and Mirabella Eclano. In particular, the elements common to both tombs are:

- the stone "sceptre", without comparisons in Italy, except the funerary Cappuccini Cave (Ingravallo 2002, p. 69, fig. 151) in the Salento peninsula. It is generally considered a symbol of prestige or, more specifically, of power. The interpretation of a metal disc from the same cave (Ingravallo 2002, p. 72, fig. 163) as a disc-headed Early Bronze Age pin and the hypothesis of the affinity of the stone "sceptre" with it seem to me to be inconsistent. A conceptual connection with the Balkan "sceptres" with an animal head (for example from Suplevac: Jovanović 1979, pl. XLIX, 1), probably to insert in a wooden handle, is, at the moment, too hazardous;
- the burial of a dog: it is a rare funerary element in Copper Age Italy (Cultraro 2005) but widely diffused from a geographical point of view and found in tombs with different features; in the "rich" contexts of Tursi and Mirabella Eclano it could have a distinctive or specific meaning;
- a large number of flint arrow heads: they are rare in other tombs of the Laterza culture and generally not so abundant in the Gaudio culture;
- the presence of a metal dagger in the Tursi tomb and of three metal artefacts in the Capo Tribù tomb at Mirabella Eclano: in regard to the Laterza culture, where metal artefacts are rare, it is clearly a distinctive element. Equally, in regard to the Gaudio culture, to find three metal artefacts from a single deposition is also very rare.

In summary, the data might be used to propose the following hypothesis, which can then be confirmed or rejected when more evidence becomes available in the future; I would suggest that there were two phases of indirect relationships between the Italian peninsula and the tumuli cultural world, which developed independently from the possible connection between Northern Italy and Central Europe, perhaps north eastern Italy being a case apart.

1) The first phase dates back to the second half of the 4th millennium B.C. The principal elements to take into consideration in relation to it are the use of horses, hammer-axes and mace-heads, specifically referring to Central Italy. As mentioned earlier, a possible route via Venezia Giulia could be hypothesized when we bear in mind the difficulties surrounding the transportation of horses by boat. However, the possible outside origin of these elements does not imply that the area of origin of the Rinaldone and Conelle cultures and their chronologies have to coincide with the introduction into the Italian peninsula either of them or of small human groups using them.

In any case, it is noteworthy that the use of horses, hammer-axes and mace-heads does not seem to have had strong consequences on the lives of the Copper Age groups in the Italian peninsula. A major problem is deciding whether the beginning of the use of differentiated sets of grave goods in some central Italian Copper Age single tombs (in the case of old excavations it is difficult to recognize if they were either pit graves or rock-cut tombs, but the distinction may not be so important, real cists being rare) is really an indication of the phenomenon of social stratification. In these cases, importance should be given to specific eminent individuals or perhaps to temporary chiefs of kin groups. It should also be remembered that often just those single tombs with abundant grave goods have been recorded in the past, but sometimes we have traces of other adjacent single tombs with no or scanty grave goods, for example at Guardistallo, Rinaldone and Osimo (Schiff Giorgini 1915; Annibaldi 1951-1952; Dolfini 2004).

If the hypothesis about the origin of their implicit ideology is correct, the distinguishing of the individuals in some single tombs in Central Italy by their grave goods (and, in a few cases, by their stone structure) could indicate a major incidence of the tumuli cultural world on the groups that adopted it, introducing an element of social differentiation, which would have a long history and many transformations during the following centuries.

2) The second phase probably dates back to the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. Some adjacent regions, linked, to some degree, with the tumuli cultural world, could have shared more intense contacts with southern rather than Central Italy, in this case obviously by sea. I refer to the eastern Adriatic coast (keeping in mind the Tursi tumulus burial), the Ionian islands (the small bone tube from San Severo) and some Aegean areas (the T-headed pins from the Gaudio eponymous cemetery and the anthropomorphic stelae from northern Apulia), even if data on intermediate points of contact with them are lacking at the moment. The use of the wagon attested at Gricignano (I think the technical problem is not only how to manufacture the wheels but also how to reduce the friction of the wheel-hub) and eventually the model of the corded decorated vessel found at Capo Alfieri could come either from the Balkans or from the Aegean. Either way, also in this phase the impact of the elements of possible origin from the tumuli cultural world on the local Copper Age societies (Gaudio and Laterza cultures were already in existence) seems to be weak. The only exception is the aforementioned trait implying a clear ranking of certain single graves, perhaps more evident than in the first phase as regards the tomb's structure and the richness of its grave goods. A social role more important than the big-man or the chief of a kin group could be hypothesized for those individuals, excluding, however, the chiefdom system because of a lack of other typical features: new social models, besides the existing range, are to be proposed (Cazzella, Recchia 2006). In any case, also in Southern Italy, the phenomenon could have contributed to the introduction of aspects of social differentiation, which developed in the following centuries.

To conclude, I would like to discuss a methodological point. The evidence for the tumuli cultural world between middle 4th and middle 3rd millennium B.C. having an indirect influence over such a marginal area as the Italian peninsula is very weak at the moment: if this hypothesis should ever be

confirmed in the future, it could reflect advances in our knowledge of the mechanisms of long distance cultural transmission. It seems to me that in the case under examination the movement of goods, ideas and perhaps small human groups, which allowed a phenomenon of diffusion in both phases, did not produce autonomous cultural entities (or at least they are not archaeologically recognizable), as probably happened in other contexts. Some traits of exogenous origin seem to have been absorbed by the human groups of the Italian peninsula between the 4th and 3rd millennium in locally differentiated manners of adaptation, contributing to an increase in the level of variability inside wider cultural systems. More generally, I think the study of the features characterising specific phenomena of diffusion (or better cultural contact) and their effects, carried out with a great prudence and outside any diffusionist trend, is an important theme in contemporary prehistoric archaeology and should not be ignored.

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